

Trial suggested for Shevardnadze

BONN (AP) — One of the Soviet Union's hardline parliamentarians said in an interview Monday that former Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze should face a criminal probe. In an interview with the Stuttgarter Nachrichten, Colonel Viktor Alksnis was quoted as saying there must be a "parliamentary investigation with criminal consequences" against Shevardnadze. Alksnis, in the newspaper interview published Monday, said Shevardnadze had negotiated too quickly for the withdrawal of hundreds of thousands of Soviet troops from the former East Germany. He also criticised Shevardnadze's negotiations on the dismantling of conventional weapons in Europe, calling the move a serious mistake. Alksnis also reportedly said that the current situation in the Soviet Union posed a greater danger to the West than in the time "under Stalin in the '40s and '50s" because the country's domestic situation was unpredictable. Shevardnadze, one of Moscow's leading reformers, abruptly resigned Thursday, telling the Soviet parliament that his country was on the brink of dictatorship and laying blame on the country's hardline conservatives.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية والرأي

Merry Christmas

The Jordan Times will not be published on Wednesday, Dec. 26, due to the Christmas holiday on Dec. 25. The next issue of the paper will appear on Thursday, Dec. 27. The Jordan Times wishes its readers, advertisers and patrons a very Merry Christmas.

Volume 15 Number 4582

AMMAN TUESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 1990, JUMA'DAH AL THANI 7, 1411

Price: Jordan 100 fils; Saudi Arabia 1.50 riyals; UAE 1.50 dirhams

Falange party official shot dead

BEIRUT (R) — Gunmen burst into the house of a Lebanese Christian party official and shot him dead and seriously wounded his pregnant wife, security sources said Monday. The killers, using guns fitted with silencers, pumped seven bullets into Falange Party official Elie Daou. He died instantly in Sunday night's raid on his home in the Beirut suburb of Kfarsihma. His wife survived the shooting but was in serious condition in hospital. Troops rounded up people near the scene for questioning. Another party official, Sami Abu Jawdeh, was shot dead last Tuesday by gunmen who stormed his jewellery shop in east Beirut.

Libya ready for weapons inspection if Israel is

WASHINGTON (R) — Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi said Monday he would welcome outside inspection of his weapons plants if Israel and other Middle East states followed suit. "We have been the first to ask for this, even before the emergence of the crisis" caused by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, he said in a satellite interview broadcast on U.S. television. But Qadhafi said he saw no prospect of such a regional disarmament pact because of what he said would be Israel's refusal to take part. "They reject the destruction of such weapons and they are determined on using them," he said, referring to chemical and nuclear weapons. "Of course, if all states are subjected to inspection, Libya would be among such states to be inspected," Qadhafi said.

Yemeni envoy files to Moscow

SANAA (R) — Yemen sent a top envoy to the Soviet Union Monday in search of a peaceful settlement to the Gulf crisis. The Yemeni news agency SABA said Chief of Staff Brigadier Abdulhussein Al Busheiri was carrying a letter to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev from Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh. "The letter deals with the role that could be played by the Soviet Union as a strategic ally of the Arab Nation in... finding a peaceful settlement based on dialogue and excluding the military option," it said.

Chevenement says Saudi row over

PARIS (R) — French Defence Minister Jean-Pierre Chevenement, visiting Saudi Arabia, said Monday he considered a controversy with local authorities over the cancellation of Christmas rock concerts for French troops was now over. "I have had a frank but friendly discussion with Prince Khaled Ben Sultan (a royal family member and Saudi army chief) and believe we should now drop the matter and not uselessly dramatise it," Chevenement told French television from Saudi Arabia. Chevenement added: "We try to take into account the customs and values of Saudi society and it would have been preferable if the Saudis had taken into account our customs at Christmas time and our public opinion." French radio said Saudis had banned the concerts because they would have been contrary to local tradition and offended national sensitivities.

Envoy urges Soviet Jews to go to Israel

BERLIN (R) — Israel's ambassador to Bonn urged Soviet Jewish migrants Monday to seek refuge first in the Jewish state, instead of Germany. Ambassador Benjamin Navon said in an interview with the Berlin daily Neue Zeit Israel was troubled that Soviet Jews fleeing anti-Semitism and dismal living conditions were streaming to newly-united Germany. "This migration brings us certain difficulties. They want to come to Germany as refugees. But this is contrary to the Zionist position that since the state of Israel has existed, there can be no more Jewish refugees in the world," he said.

Tel Aviv will be hit first, Iraq warns

King Fahd, allies ready to go to war

Combined agency dispatches

IRAQI PRESIDENT Saddam Hussein told Spanish television that Tel Aviv will be Iraq's first target if war breaks out in the Gulf. He said an Israeli government official warned Monday that Iraq's counterattack would be "effective and painful."

The Iraqi president had warned Israel before the Gulf crisis began nearly five months ago with Iraq's takeover of Kuwait, but it was the first time he said Iraq would be Iraq's first target.

Luis Marin, a journalist for the Spanish station Telo 5, said Saddam told him in an interview Saturday that Tel Aviv would be the first target in a Gulf war whether or not Israel joins an international war effort against Iraq.

The interview is scheduled to be broadcast Wednesday. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir replied that Iraq would be "harmful in a most serious way" if it attacks Israel.

Israeli government spokesman Yossi Olmert, interviewed on an NBC television programme Monday, said, "We would like to make it very clear to (Iraq) that Israel is not Kuwait and... we would know how to defend ourselves and our reaction would be most effective and painful."

In Doha, Saudi Arabia's King Fahd said Monday that his kingdom and five Gulf allies were ready to go to war with Iraq if it failed to quit Kuwait. "Brothers, we took a decision to return Kuwait, peacefully if peace were possible, but by war when only war is best," he told his five allies at summit talks in Doha, the capital of Qatar.

The king, whose country is host to the great majority of the U.S.-led multinational forces ranged against Iraq, drew a grim picture, saying the horizon was dark.

"We are able to take the decision on confrontation, as we are also able to take the decision of peace," he said in a speech to the GCC Cooperation Council (GCC), which is holding its first summit since Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

Fahd pledged to "put the Gulf house in order," indicating the GCC governments would work for democracy and welfare of their peoples. He urged his allies to "unite politically, build the Gulf common market, accelerate the peace towards economic integration, and achieve collective defence."

The statement was issued as the leaders of the richest Arab states met to discuss pooling funds to acquire sophisticated weapons from East and West to arm a unified defence force for the Gulf region.

Officials said Fahd and his five GCC partners also talked about establishing a joint military industry and studied a \$15-billion assistance programme for Arab countries hurt by the Gulf crisis.

Iraq has meanwhile recalled its ambassadors to the United States and Western Europe for urgent consultation on the Gulf crisis, officials said Monday.

One of the diplomats said 10 ambassadors have been conferring with Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz and other senior officials.

The diplomat said the objective of their talks was to examine how to improve Iraq's relations with foreign countries which have been severely damaged by its invasion of Kuwait.

Iraq's envoy to the U.N., Abdul Amir Al Anbari, said in Amman before returning to Baghdad that his government was using the holiday season to discuss the crisis in detail.

"I believe the government thought it was time to make some consultation as well as to bring our ambassadors up to date," he said in Amman before returning to Baghdad.

The reason is simply to discuss in further detail the Gulf crisis and prospects of a peaceful settlement in the crisis.

(Continued on page 5)

Badran pursues cabinet negotiations after reaching accord with Brotherhood

By Ghadeer Taher
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — After finalising details with the Muslim Brotherhood over its participation in a new government, Prime Minister Mudar Badran is now negotiating with other blocs in the Lower House of Parliament, informed sources said Monday.

At the same time, said an official source, the premier "does not feel pressed at this point in time into rushing to form a new government."

"There are other priorities in terms of national security and other issues against the backdrop of the situation in the Gulf, and the prime minister feels that a few days of delay in announcing a new government will not do any harm," the official told the Jordan Times. He cautioned that it is near impossible to pinpoint a date for the reshuffle since the situation is "changing constantly."

A Muslim Brotherhood deputy said that details for the

Brotherhood's inclusion in the cabinet "have been finalised" with the premier. "It was agreed with the prime minister that he would choose five nominees from a list of nine candidates already submitted by the Brotherhood."

The list includes, according to the deputy who preferred anonymity, four Brotherhood deputies — Hameez Mansour, Yousef Al Athem, Abdullah Akyeh and Majed Khalifeh — and five from outside parliament — Adnan Al Jaljoui, Mohammed Awaidah, Fahmi Al Malkawi, Ibrahim Zeid Al Kellani and Fayed Al Rabeeh. No details of portfolios sought or promised were available.

The Brotherhood's agreement with the premier was reached after the virtual break-up of a parliamentary block which grouped the 22 Brotherhood deputies with eight independent Islamists and six pan-Arab nationalists.

House Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat, a prominent member of the Brotherhood, said he was not privy to the "details of the negotiations" but confirmed that the group had approved "certain names."

Arabiyat, in a telephone interview with the Jordan Times, also affirmed that the approval of the names came in line with a "unified strategy and position" adopted by the Brotherhood.

Although Arabiyat would not confirm that there was a split in the Brotherhood, other sources said there had been dissent among the ranks of Brotherhood deputies against joining Badran's government.

Four members of the group, in defiance of the leadership's decision to join, tried to pass a motion in the coalition against participation. The coalition broke up after a decision could not be reached over the issue, thus paving the way for Badran to initiate negotiations with smaller groups than a 36-member group in the 80-member assembly.

According to other parliamentary sources the expected government reshuffle will tentatively affect 10 portfolios. The Muslim Brotherhood is expected to get five portfolios, independent Islamists two posts, and one portfolio each for pan-Arab Nationalists, Democratic and Liberal blocs in Parliament.

nationalist attacks linked to the three-year uprising.

Economics Minister David Magen said last week that he has won wide government backing for a plan to refuse entry to about 60,000 Palestinians working in Israel without a permit. This would also create employment for newly arrived Soviet immigrants.

Haaretz noted one reason for encouraging the occupied territories' economy was the fear that rising Palestinian unemployment, coupled with lack of economic infrastructure, could create "a ticking time bomb" in the West Bank and Gaza.

About 65,000 Gazans, or half the local labour force, are employed in Israel. If fired, they stand little chance of finding work in the impoverished strip, home to 750,000 Palestinians, of them 70 per cent refugees.

In another development, prison authority chief ordered a West Bank prison commander removed from service after Palestinian inmates staged a play showing the murder of a suspected informant, officials said.

French support crucial for Benjedid's efforts

By Lamis K. Andoni
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — As Algerian President Chadli Benjedid is pursuing his mission for peace in the Gulf, officials and analysts say that the success of his mission largely depends on French support for an initiative involving a compromise solution for the almost five-month-old Gulf crisis.

Such an initiative, according to officials, will be based on a combination of Arab ideas for compromise and a French proposal launched last September for convening an international peace conference to address all the conflicts in the Middle East.

Well-informed Arab officials say that the basis for a compromise sought by Algeria involves a parallel process of negotiations to end the Gulf crisis on the one hand and the Arab-Israeli conflict on the other.

His Majesty King Hussein has called for the convening an international peace conference on the Middle East along with the beginning of the implementation of the United Security Council resolutions on the Gulf crisis.

But the U.S. remains non-committal, at least publicly, on the Jordanian initiative, while Arab officials and Jordanian sources believe that Washington has deliberately ignored the proposal. "Jordan is not viewed (by the Americans) as a neutral side," said one Arab official.

Jordanian officials have repeatedly said that there has been a "deliberate misunderstanding" of the Jordanian position and role because it has refused to join the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq.

Jordanian officials, however, appear to be more concerned at this stage over finding a solution to the Gulf crisis than justifying Jordan's stance

towards the issue. "Algeria is qualified to play the role," said a Jordanian official.

But Jordanian and Arab officials insist that Algerian efforts will be insufficient to pull a peace process off the ground without active French support and participation.

They say that a joint Arab-European effort is not necessarily aimed at countering the hardline American approach but rather at exploring a middle ground to pave the way for a U.S.-Iraqi dialogue.

"The two parties who have strait-jacketed themselves are Iraq and the U.S.," said the Arab official. Consequently, a third party, most probably Algeria with European backing, could find a way to tie in the position of the two sides, he said.

Iraqi anticipation that Paris will play a pivotal role in pressing for a compromise solution and for settlement of all conflicts in the region had

prompted Baghdad to release all French nationals long before it allowed all foreign nationals it held as deterrent against attack.

France, however, did not rise to the occasion. According to a senior Arab diplomat, Baghdad was warned by its friends in the Arab World against expecting a major French step in return for the release of all French nationals.

Iraq was also told, they said, that Paris would move if there was a practical Iraqi step indicating its readiness to relinquish Kuwait.

Some Arab officials who were in touch with Baghdad and Paris maintain that Iraq has missed "a real chance for a breakthrough that would have brought about a compromise and the sought-for linkage."

Other officials and analysts

(Continued on page 5)

Israeli troops outnumber pilgrims in Bethlehem

BETHLEHEM, West Bank (Agencies) — The main colours of Christmas eve in Bethlehem this year were purple, red, black and green — the hues of the berets of hundreds of soldiers dispatched to provide security in the holy town.

Only a few dozen tourists were seen as the Roman Catholic patriarch of Jerusalem, Michel Sabbah, came to Bethlehem at midday Monday to open the Christmas season in the Holy Land.

A light breeze fell as a procession of priests led Sabbah through Manger Square and into the Church of the Nativity, built over the grotto where tradition holds the Christ child was born.

A strike, called by the underground leadership of the Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation, closed all shops and restaurants in Bethlehem.

And there were no decorations, as officials of this town of 10,000 decided to cancel most celebrations in solidarity with the three-year Palestinian revolt.

The town's mayor, Elias Freij, issued a statement praying for "peace on earth and goodwill towards all people and peace in the holy land between Israelis and Palestinians, and peace amongst all the Arabs."

Freij said the lack of tourists was not due to the Gulf crisis or the uprising. He blamed it instead on a U.S. State Department warning for Americans not

to travel to the Middle East.

"It is the fault of the American greed, to fight for the oil in Kuwait and to disregard the human rights of all people here," he said.

Israeli officials were predicting that fewer than 7,000 people would visit Bethlehem this year, down from a sparse 10,000 last year.

Before the uprising began in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, thousands of pilgrims would gather for holiday festivities here.

Gabriele Beitz, a tourist from Heidelberg, Germany, was visiting with her husband and 11-year-old daughter, and said she was frightened at "finding the streets so empty, it is a very fearful situation."

"We are very depressed about the place and about the whole political situation here," she said. "For us, Christmas is an event of peace, and here you cannot feel peace."

In Manger Square, Sabbah was greeted by the Israeli military governor of Bethlehem, Dudu Mufaz. The greeting is a tradition that stretches back to the times when the Turks and then the British ruled Palestine.

As a Christmas gesture, the military announced it was releasing 217 Palestinian prisoners arrested during the uprising.

All those released were from occupied Gaza Strip. Virtually all Palestinians in the

Gaza Strip are Muslim.

Several of those released from the army's Ketziot prison camp in the desert said they had just days or weeks left in their sentences.

They said they were freed early to make room for hundreds of Hamas activists arrested after the Islamic fundamentalist group claimed responsibility for stabbing to death three Israelis in a Tel Aviv factory on Dec. 14.

In eastern Saudi Arabia U.S. forces were on heightened alert against attacks on Christmas eve as the military observed the day with subdued celebrations and light duties.

At one of the major port facilities in eastern Saudi Arabia, guards intensified security checks as part of the stepped-up alert for the Christmas season. A military source, speaking anonymously, confirmed the heightened alert status.

Norman Schwarzkopf, the commander of U.S. forces in the Gulf, said in an interview with four reporters last week that his troops would be prepared for increased danger over the holidays.

The British Broadcasting Corporation planned a Christmas eve television programme using satellites to link British and other allied soldiers in Bahrain to families in Germany and England with a sermon by Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie.

Commission unanimously endorses National Charter

AMMAN (Potra) — The General Commission for drafting the National Charter met here Monday under the chairmanship of Ahmad Obaidat and unanimously endorsed the draft charter.

A statement issued at the end of the meeting said that the draft charter, which was signed by all the commission members, will be submitted to His Majesty King Hussein, who had entrusted the commission with the task.

According to the statement, the charter reviews Jordan's history and has eight chapters dealing with political pluralism and democracy, national security, national economy, education, Jordanian-Palestinian relations and Jordanian-Islamic relations.

Obaidat voiced appreciation of the commission's members for their efforts that contributed to the preparation of the charter.

Commission member Eideh Al Midaq delivered an address at the final session noting that the charter was needed as a tool to help further cement national unity and to guide political and economic endeavours in Jordan. She described the charter as a national document contributing to the country's drive to attain development.

Rushdie embraces Islam, disavows writings

LONDON (R) — British author Salman Rushdie embraced the Muslim faith Monday and disavowed parts of his book "The Satanic Verses" for which Iran ordered his death.

Indian-born Rushdie, 43, has been in hiding for nearly two years since Iran's late spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini ordered his death for blasphemy.

A spokeswoman said the author hoped the death order might now lapse. But reaction from Iran, which earlier this month upheld Khomeini's death order, was awaited and some British Muslims said Rushdie's action Monday was not enough.

Moderate Muslim leaders and Rushdie's spokeswoman said he had signed a statement in the presence of Islamic scholars led by Egyptian Secretary of State for Religious Endowments Mohammad Ali Mahjoub.

It said: "I do not agree with any statement in my novel 'The Satanic Verses,'" uttered by any of the characters who insult the Prophet Mohammad or who cast aspersions upon Islam or upon the authenticity of the Holy Koran or who reject the divinity of Allah."

Rushdie, who has earlier been quoted as calling himself a lapsed Muslim, pledged "to witness that there is no God but Allah and that Mohammad is His last Prophet."

He also undertook not to pub-

lish a paperback edition of his book or permit further translations "while any risk of further offence exists."

The statement was released by the moderate Islamic Society for the Promotion of Religious Tolerance in the United Kingdom.

But a spokesman for radical Muslims in Britain, Kalim Siddiqui, said the death order against Rushdie would remain until "The Satanic Verses" was withdrawn.

Frances D'Souza, who heads the International Committee for the Defence of Salman Rushdie, confirmed the authenticity of Monday's statement.

She said Rushdie was not disavowing the entire contents of the book but was saying that "he does not agree with the bits of dialogue which could be perceived as an insult to Islam."

In February 1989 Khomeini declared Rushdie's book a heresy and ordered Muslims around the world to kill the author.

Monday's signing was preceded by several contacts between Rushdie and Hasham Al Essawy, a Muslim moderate who is chairman of the Islamic Society for the Promotion of Religious Tolerance.

Essawy was present at the secret signing, as was an Egyptian diplomat representing Egypt's ambassador to Britain.

Search given up for missing sailor in Haifa

HAIFA (AP) — Divers Monday abandoned the search for the last of the 21 men lost in the ferry disaster that befell the aircraft carrier Saratoga, U.S. officials said.

"There are no words that can express the heartfelt sorrow of this entire 5,000-man ship," said the carrier's skipper, Captain Joseph S. Mobley.

Among the 1,200 mourners were many of the 91 survivors of the chartered Israeli ferry Tuvia, which capsized and sank as it was carrying 102 Saratoga crewmen back from a Christmas shore leave.

Mobley told reporters that the navy concluded with "utmost confidence" that Fleming had perished. "He was definitely on the ferry at the time of the accident, he was definitely not rescued," he said.

Nineteen bodies were recovered Saturday, including six pulled by Israeli divers from the sunken, two-deck ferry. Another was found Sunday, shortly before a military air transport jet flew the corpses to Dover air base in Delaware.

The Saratoga task force, based at Mayport naval air station in Florida, includes the destroyer Sampson, cruiser South Carolina and combat stores ship Sirius. It has a crew of 6,200 men.

The Saratoga and its escort ships had come from the Red Sea.

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U.S. Congress would deny Bush blank cheque in Gulf Soviet conservatives demand daily review of Kremlin policy in Gulf

WASHINGTON (R) — The powerful U.S. Senate Democratic leader predicted Sunday that Congress would deny President George Bush "blank cheque authorization" to attack Iraq if it remains in Kuwait after the U.N.-imposed Jan. 15 deadline.

"I don't think such a resolution would pass. I surely would not vote for it," Senator George Mitchell said in an interview on U.S. television.

"That would be a negation of the role of Congress in our system of government," the Maine Democrat said.

He described what the Bush administration wanted as "a U.N.-type resolution — a blank-check authorization to say the president at some indefinite future time under unspecified circumstances, can make war."

The U.S. constitution gives the Congress the power to declare war, but it also makes the president commander-in-chief and gives him broad authority as the nation's chief executive.

Mitchell said the Congress, which is dominated by Democrats, will "debate, discuss and vote" on use of the U.S. force in the Gulf, but he did not specify whether this would occur before or after the Jan. 15 deadline.

More than 400,000 U.S. military personnel are due to be in the Gulf by the middle of next month, the bulk of the multinational force opposing Iraq.

Democratic leaders have made plans for the new Congress that reconvenes on Jan. 3 to remain on call for a Gulf debate instead of recessing until Jan. 23 as originally planned.

Mitchell, who just returned from a visit to the Gulf, said the United States should regard the possible use of force as a last resort — only if United Nations-imposed sanctions failed to force Iraq from Kuwait.

The administration has repeatedly voiced its contention that Bush does not need any further authorization from Congress before ordering any offensive military action in the Gulf.

Mitchell said the likelihood of war would grow if Secretary of State James Baker failed to meet Iraq's Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz because of the current

stalemate over the scheduling of follow-up talks in Baghdad on a mutually acceptable date.

"But I don't think (war is) inevitable, and I surely don't think it's necessary at this time," Mitchell said.

"I think the best resolution is to stay the course with current economic sanctions which are having a real effect in Iraq, and try to bring about the withdrawal that way," he added. "If we must use force ultimately, I will favour that. I don't think Jan. 15th is the time for that."

Pressure on Moscow

On the other end of the East-West spectrum, a powerful bloc of conservatives is demanding the Soviet parliament to assume daily oversight powers over Kremlin policy in the Gulf crisis.

A resolution proposed by the right-wing Soyuz faction in parliament Monday would require the foreign ministry to give daily reports on the crisis from Jan. 5 to 13.

The parliament would then meet in special sitting on Jan. 14 — one day before the expiration of the United Nations deadline for Iraq to withdraw its forces from Kuwait.

A second provision reserved final say over the introduction of Soviet military forces for the parliament.

Foreign Minister Eduard She-

vardovskiy cited conservative opposition to his Gulf policy in his resignation speech last Thursday.

Shevardovskiy had been hounded by conservative critics, who charged he was preparing the use of Soviet forces to back up Western demands for an Iraqi withdrawal.

It was not immediately clear when the full parliament, the Congress of People's Deputies, could vote on the draft resolution.

"The congress on the whole supports the policy which is being carried out by the Soviet president in relation to the aggression of Iraq against Kuwait."

"At the same time, it believes inadmissible any participation of the Soviet Union in the military actions against Iraq which contradicts the state interests of the Soviet Union," the proposed resolution said.

"The application of military force abroad can be taken by the USSR president only with the permission of the supreme Soviet (the standing parliament)," the resolution added.

Soviet hardliners, alarmed by what they see as the Kremlin's shift towards the West, have dug in their heels over possible military involvement against Iraq, a long-time military and political ally.

Gadhafi said to pledge help for Belgians

BRUSSELS (R) — Libyan leader colonel Muammar Qadhafi has pledged to do all he can to win the release of four Belgian hostages held for three years by a Tripoli-backed Palestinian group, Belgian media reported Monday. Newspapers and state-owned radio said Qadhafi gave the undertaking during a meeting in Tripoli Sunday with Jaak Gabriels, president of the Flemish regional party Volksunie, the smallest party in Belgium's five-party coalition government, and Volksunie Senator Hans de Belder. The Libyan leader also asked Belgium to back his call for a special meeting of the United Nations Security Council, enlarged to include Arab countries, to discuss the Gulf crisis.

He added that many of those who have reserved seats may not use them after all, citing the period immediately following the Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait, when about half the passengers who bought tickets out of the region later sent them back for refunds.

The British community in Bahrain is down from around 9,000 before the invasion to 1,500, and numbers are still falling following London's advice that all dependents should leave

block-booking as many as 10-20 seats on some flights to Europe and other points to "make sure that their people are protected."

Airlines and travel agents surveyed in Bahrain said flights to Britain, the Philippines, India and Egypt were fully booked from about Jan. 1 through Jan. 15, with long waiting lists. In some cases the lists are so long they've been closed.

"I wouldn't say there's panic, but concern is spreading," Horsley said.

He added that many of those who have reserved seats may not use them after all, citing the period immediately following the Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait, when about half the passengers who bought tickets out of the region later sent them back for refunds.

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Three soldiers killed in UAE, Saudi Arabia

WASHINGTON (R) — Two U.S. sailors on shore leave from the aircraft carrier USS Midway were killed when their tour bus overturned Sunday in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The U.S. navy reported Monday.

Five sailors were injured, two of them seriously, in the mishap, which brought to at least 79 the number of U.S. military personnel killed in the region since U.S. forces were deployed in response to Iraq's Aug. 2 takeover of Kuwait.

The sailors from the Midway had been taking part in a ship-sponsored tour during a routine port call when the accident occurred at about 11 a.m. Abu Dhabi time, the navy said.

Names of the dead and injured were withheld pending notification of relatives.

The cause of the accident was under investigation, said navy spokesman Lieutenant Dane Lajoie.

One soldier was killed and another injured when their truck overturned in eastern Saudi Arabia, raising the toll in operations

Desert-Shield to 80, the U.S. military said Sunday.

The soldiers, were enroute to a logistics area early Saturday morning when the 2½-ton truck was involved in the accident, the military said.

Names of the soldiers were withheld pending notification of next of kin.

The army is investigating the incident, the U.S. central command's joint information bureau said in a statement.

The truck overturned on the same day a chartered Israeli ferry capsized while returning to the USS Saratoga off the Israeli port of Haifa. Twenty one sailors drowned, the deadliest accident involving U.S. servicemen in Operation Desert Shield.

Lajoie said the bodies of 20 U.S. sailors from the Saratoga who drowned in the Mediterranean were to arrive at Dover air force base in Delaware later Monday.

The body of one other sailor killed in the accident was still missing.

Foreign recruits for Iraqi popular army

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq's foreign recruits in the Gulf crisis broadened their rifles and chanted: "Down, down USA, down, down Bush," in front of whirling cameras Monday.

Iraqi officials, who say they have the backing of the Arab masses in the crisis over the takeover of Kuwait, took journalists to a camp at Nahrawan, south of Baghdad, to see the recruits for Iraq's popular army militia.

Several hundred soldiers, dressed in dusty black overalls and green caps and boots, paraded in front of the press. They made victory signs and shouted slogans in support of President Saddam Hussein.

Apart from Palestinians, officers said the recruits came from Sudan, Lebanon, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen, Mauritania, Egypt, Jordan and the Eritrean region of Ethiopia.

Many were studying or working in Iraq before joining up.

A Sudanese from Khartoum said he had joined because "America wants to kill Arabs."

Another recruit said he would fight with Iraq "to defend Islamic land."

Waving Iraqi-made copies of Soviet Kalashnikov rifles, recruits marched across a freezing mud parade ground shouting: "Saddam Hussein, we are your soldiers... we will free our land."

Iraqi officers interrupted reporters' conversations with the foreign recruits even when their comments were supportive of Baghdad.

Baghdad residents say some Sudanese, Egyptians and others join the popular army for the pay, while others may be ideologically motivated.

Officials say privates in the popular army are fed and housed free and paid 90 dinars a month (\$290 at the official exchange rate). Former government workers are paid whatever they earned before.

Fresh fighting near Somali capital

MOGADISHU (R) — Fresh fighting flared in the Somali capital Mogadishu at the weekend with government troops and armed rebels engaged in several hours of heavy combat, a police spokesman said Monday.

He said several rebels were killed in the exchange, which took place near the livestock market on the edge of the capital, scene of violent clashes earlier this month in which 12 people were killed.

The spokesman said 17 "bandits" had been captured and four government soldiers injured, but gave no other details.

Local residents said hundreds of rebels took part in the fighting.

"We were hit from both sides with artillery shells and mortars for three hours," one resident who fled with his wife and five-month-old baby said. "It was a blood bath."

Mogadishu has witnessed a series of vicious ethnic clashes this month as rebel forces fighting to overthrow the government of President Siyad Barre close in on the capital.

Foreign embassies and aid organisations have evacuated most of their staff because of the rising violence and instability.

One rebel group — the United Somali Congress (USC) — was reported last week to be within 50 kilometres of Mogadishu and was infiltrating small groups to spread panic among the population and government forces.

Last Thursday, a group of what were believed to be USC rebels attacked Mogadishu international airport and killed a police inspector.

Barre has scheduled multiparty elections for Feb. 1, 1991. He resigned as ruling chief when a new constitution aimed at relaxing tight security came into effect in October.

Five rebel groups joined forces, instead in an alliance aimed at toppling his government, saying that while Barre was still in power there was no point attending peace talks due to be held in Cairo in mid-December.

Suez chief confirms security tightened

CAIRO (AP) — Security in the Suez Canal is being stepped up as potential threats to navigation increase with the growing possibility of war in the Gulf, the canal's top official said.

Mohammad Ezzat Adel, chairman of the Suez Canal Authority, said foreign security services are cooperating in the special measures.

Adel's remarks, published Monday in Al-Ahram, Al-Akhar and Al-Gomhouria, Cairo's main newspapers, were the first official admission of reinforced security in the vital waterway linking the Red Sea with the Mediterranean.

Canal sources disclosed the tightening to the Associated Press last Friday. They said the aim was to prevent a possible Iraqi attempt to scuttle a vessel in the waterway to block it. They also said the precautions focused on cement-carrying ships because of the hazards to traffic of wet cement.

Sealing the 162-kilometre canal would slow down greatly the flow of troops and arms from Atlantic and Mediterranean points to the U.S.-led multinational force assembled in the Gulf region. Without the canal shortcut, ships would have to take the much longer and more expensive route from Europe to the U.S. east coast around southern Africa's Cape of Good Hope.

Blockade also would disrupt Gulf oil supplies to Western Europe and hurt Egypt financially. The canal, a major hard-currency earner, pumped more than \$1.5 billion into the treasury this year.

"A plan to ensure the safety of all ships transiting the canal is being implemented in cooperation with security authorities in Egypt and abroad," Adel said without identifying the foreign agencies.

He said the plan includes "meticulous searches of all ships by specialised groups equipped with advanced tools for security checks" and round-the-clock electronic monitoring of the canal.

Shipboard checks are being done on ships "of all nationalities, types and tonnages, regardless of whether they carry oil, cement or other dangerous materials."

Among security measures is placement of cement carriers at the end of canal convoys so that an incident would not hold up other vessels. The 38,000-tonne Romanian bulk carrier Beus was seen at the end of a south-bound convoy last Friday, followed by two canal authority salvage tugs.

"There is an increased likelihood of danger to the channel as the possibilities grow of an outbreak of war in the Gulf," Al-Ahram quoted Adel as saying.

Despite this, he said, "the canal authority has received no security reports about a possible attempt by some ships to block navigation to halt military supplies to the international forces in the Gulf, as some news agencies said."

But two state-owned newspapers, Al-Akhar and Al-Gomhouria, said canal authorities indeed had received intelligence reports "late" about such a threat.

A senior security official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Friday a security upgrade was ordered nationwide immediately after Iraq's takeover of Kuwait. It blanketed vital installations like the canal, the Aswan High Dam in southern Egypt, iron and steel factories and other key industries, he said.

Despite Adel's denial, the increased watch at the canal apparently was prompted by more recent fears of sabotage.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Anglican bishop going to Iraq

NICOSIA (R) — The Anglican bishop of Cyprus and the Gulf has been given a visa by Baghdad to make a "non-political" pastoral visit to church members in Iraq, church sources said. Bishop John Brown told fellow clergymen he planned to visit Iraq from Dec. 28 through Jan. 3 after getting approval from the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Robert Runcie, and the British Foreign Office. "This is strictly a pastoral visit by the bishop to part of his diocese, with no political overtones," the British-born prelate told clergy in a letter obtained by Reuters. An estimated 30,000 of the world's 70 million Anglicans live in the church's Middle East province, which includes Brown's sprawling diocese, the sources said.

Iran: 18,000 drug smugglers, addicts held

NICOSIA (AP) — More than 1,900 alleged drug traffickers and over 16,000 addicts were arrested in Iran in a five-week nationwide sweep, Tehran Radio reported. The broadcast, monitored in Nicosia, quoted the Komitah, the organisation responsible for internal security, as saying that more than 750 kilograms of various drugs were confiscated in the crackdown. The radio said 57 guns and 90 vehicles were confiscated in the raids. Iran's draconian laws call for a mandatory death sentence for possession of even small quantities of drugs. The Iranians have recently stepped up an anti-narcotics campaign launched two years ago. More than 1,500 alleged drug traffickers have been hanged since then, and over 100,000 so-called addicts have been thrown into hard labour camps. Iranian opposition groups, and independent human rights organisations, maintain the drug-related hangings cover execution of political opponents.

France denies U.S. envoy met Aoun

FRANCE (R) — France denied Monday that U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Rayan Crocker met ousted Lebanese rebel General Michel Aoun at the French embassy in Beirut last week. "This report is without any foundation," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said. The spokesman was commenting on a Dec. 22 Reuter report from Beirut quoting Lebanese government sources which said the meeting was apparently the first between Aoun and a foreign diplomat since his oust by Syrian troops on Oct. 13. Since then, Aoun has lived in the French embassy as a refugee. Lebanon's new government has asked Paris to hand over Aoun to be tried as a war criminal but France insists on granting him asylum.

Big business for airlines, removal companies as Jan. 15 looms

By Martin Morris
The Associated Press

BAHRAIN — Airplane tickets are selling out and removal companies are shipping many expatriate families' belongings home as the United Nations' Jan. 15 deadline allowing force against Iraq approaches.

Britain, Ireland, Sweden and New Zealand are among countries that have recently advised dependents of nationals working in Bahrain, neighbouring Qatar and parts of Saudi Arabia to leave the region before the deadline expires.

Travel agencies are flooded with calls as thousands try to purchase air tickets, either because they're leaving soon or as a precaution in case they have to evacuate later.

"The phones are ringing all the time," said Bill Horsley, sales manager at Bahrain's Kanoo Travel Agency, one of the largest in the region.

Horsley said companies were

block-booking as many as 10-20 seats on some flights to Europe and other points to "make sure that their people are protected."

Airlines and travel agents surveyed in Bahrain said flights to Britain, the Philippines, India and Egypt were fully booked from about Jan. 1 through Jan. 15, with long waiting lists. In some cases the lists are so long they've been closed.

"I wouldn't say there's panic, but concern is spreading," Horsley said.

He added that many of those who have reserved seats may not use them after all, citing the period immediately following the Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait, when about half the passengers who bought tickets out of the region later sent them back for refunds.

The British community in Bahrain is down from around 9,000 before the invasion to 1,500, and numbers are still falling following London's advice that all dependents should leave

by Jan. 15.

The United States has about 750 nationals in Bahrain. The U.S. government has not advised citizens to leave, and embassy officials say there is no immediate sign of an American exodus.

The officials have assured Americans that they will be protected in case of war and evacuated if necessary.

About half of this island nation's 500,000 inhabitants are expatriates.

So far, India, Pakistan, the Philippines and other Third World nations that provide the bulk of the expatriate workforce in Bahrain have not advised their citizens to leave.

Philippines who called their embassy said they were told that in the event of war affecting Bahrain, they should rush to the main port, Mina Salaman, for possible evacuation.

Remittances from Gulf countries are a major source of foreign exchange for these nations,

as well as a key source of income for thousands of families.

"I think even the poor Indians who need the jobs badly will sacrifice and go back," said one Indian, Abdullah Mammi, whose family already has returned to Kerala in India.

"Actually, we're in a shaky mood, thinking a lot about whether we'll have war or we won't."

The foreign exodus from Bahrain does not appear to be as pronounced as in eastern Saudi Arabia. There, the great majority of Westerners are reported to be leaving, except for those in essential jobs.

The U.S. community, mainly oil workers and their families, has shrunk from 12,000 people to 8,000 in recent weeks and the exodus is expected to accelerate before Jan. 15.

Among those Britons planning to stay in Bahrain with his family is Richard Warnes, a senior engineer at the state-run electricity company who has

been in the country for 12 years.

"When the shooting starts the first thing that will happen is Bahrain airport will be closed and we'll be stuck here," said Warnes, 43, of Nidderdale, Yorkshire.

"We've decided we'll stay here and sit it out. We're expecting a shooting war. It's going to be pretty nasty, a lot of troops are going to suffer."

But Warnes expressed confidence in the defensive shield thrown around Bahrain by the U.S.-led multinational force, including anti-missile and anti-aircraft defences.

He acknowledged there is a risk Iraqi missiles with chemical warheads might get through and hit Bahrain. But he was confident that 99 per cent would miss their targets or be shot down.

"Our main worry is what will happen with the schools," said Warnes.

As civilians leave the island,

schools lose teachers and some are shutting down.

Removal companies report a heavy workload as expatriate families ship their household belongings out of the region.

"We're seeing more people moving for good, rather than just seeing some of their stuff away," said Louise Foster of Scopac International removals.

Foster said the company was shipping out dozens of households a week — and only two households have been shipped into Bahrain through her company so far this month.

A civil defence expert at the British Home Office, Roger Chick, recently told Bahrain's Al-Akhar newspaper that Bahrain was well equipped to look after its population should war break out.

He said 15,000 Bahrain government employees have been trained to cope with possible chemical or biological attack.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME ONE

15:30 Koran
15:40 Programme review
15:45 Children programmes
15:50 News Summary
16:10 Local programme
16:45 Programme review
16:50 News in Arabic
16:55 Arabic series
17:30 Programme review
17:40 Local programme
17:50 News summary in Arabic

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Christmas film for children
18:05 News in French
18:15 Aujourd'hui en Jordanie
18:20 News in Hebrew
18:25 News in Arabic
18:30 Charles in Charge
21:10 Documentary: "Beyond the Wall"
22:00 News in English
22:30 French feature film

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church, Sweidat Tel. 810740.
Assumption of God Church, Tel. 637785, 685326.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
Church of the Assumption Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.
Terrestrial Church Tel. 623366.
Church of the Assumption Tel. 623541.
Anglican Church Tel. 625385, Tel. 625431.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
St. Ignace International Church Tel. 685376.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817, 649532.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
It will be cloudy and cold with occasional rains in the western part of the Kingdom. Winds will be northerly moderate to gusty at times. In

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Agaba, it will be partly cloudy and there will be a chance for scattered showers of rain. Winds will be northerly moderate and sea calm.
Min. Max. Temp.
Agaba 6 / 15
Desert 4 / 16
Jordan Valley 13 / 22
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 13, Agaba 26. Humidity readings: Amman 91 per cent, Agaba 25 per cent.

NIGHT DUTY

ADOKAN:
Dr. Abdul Hafiz Khawaja 791954
Dr. Khalid Abdo 671229
Dr. Abbas Al Hakim 891256
Dr. Tayseer Khairi 606857
Firas pharmacy 661912
Fawwaz pharmacy 773236
Al Asmaa pharmacy 672553
Naboukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salan pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644645

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Emergency 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 771211
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 843402
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 628800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 891467
Ammar Municipality 787111
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

HOSPITALS

ADOKAN:
Haseem Medical Centre 815813/32
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn 642816
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Nabaa, J. Amman 634140
Palestine, Shamsat 661714
Shamsat Hospital 669131
University Hospital 645845
Al-Musharraf Hospital 662279
The Islamic, Abadi 664146
Al-Ahli, Abadi 664146
Italian, Al-Muhajir 777013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775112
Army, Marja 891611/13
Queen Abla Hospital 622409/90
Amal Hospital 674153

OVERSEAS CALLS

Central Amman Telephone 010230
Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636361
RJ Flight Information 06-52300
Queen Abla Int. Airport 06-52300

ARRIVALS

ARRIVALS:
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)83323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)991071
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)98732
REDDO:
Princess Banna Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafaa Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)52200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Tunisia to train Jordanian instructors

AMMAN (J.T.) — Tunisia is to help train Jordanian personnel for periods ranging between three to six months before they can take up posts as instructors at Ministry of Education's vocational training centres in the Kingdom, according to an agreement signed here Monday.

The training programme will be financed through a technical assistance agreement between the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Ministry of Education.

The agreement is for training 49 men and women teachers in a month's time from now and in two stages. First a group of 25 and then 24 will be trained in Tunisia, with the whole programme ending by the second half of 1991.

The total cost of training the instructors will come up to JD 152,000, according to the agreement which was signed by Minister of Education and Higher Education Mohammad Hamdan and Tunisian Ambassador to Jordan Mohammad Al Munji.

The agreement with Tunisia came soon after talks between the Ministry of Education and a delegation representing the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research in Yemen.

Dr. Ahmad Qadi, Yemeni Minister of Education who led his country's delegation to Jordan, wound up the visit and left for home.

Dr. Hamdan was among the senior Jordanian officials who discussed with Qadi exchanges of educational expertise and cooperation in scientific research programmes.

The Yemeni delegation voiced willingness to benefit from the Jordanian education experiments, and also in higher education and scientific research.

Qadi was also received by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, and he toured several educational institutions in Jordan.

Message of peace on Christmas eve

Following is a message of peace issued by Monsignor Raouf Najjar from the Roman Catholic Church in Amman on Christmas eve:

AMMAN (J.T.) — As the pendulum of time moves closer to the climax of the Gulf crisis, Christmas eve is a beautiful opportunity to invite the humanity especially leaders of the world to meditate about ways and means to give peace to the whole world, especially to our Middle East.

It was at Bethlehem in a stable that Virgin Mary gave birth to Jesus, the saviour of the world; then a multitude of angels hovered over the stable, and their singing filled the air with heavenly music: "Glory to God in high heaven. Peace on earth to those on whom his favour rests." The angels brought the good news of our Saviour's birth to the whole world.

The birth of Christ was an event that had a special meaning for us, human beings: it will prompt us to show love to our fellow men.

The war is threatening our soil. Foreign forces and Arab forces are approaching each other; anger and bitterness are in the hearts; then it is time to ask those two forces to raise white flags of peace because Christmas should bring peace to the whole world.

Christ who comes today will bring us peace, but the humanity must first prepare their hearts to receive Him. They must rid their hearts of hatred and greed, and happiness will come to the world.

A modern war in the area, to a modern war in the Gulf could be catastrophic, especially to the human race. This is why each one of us should be a peacemaker and should promote peace, because we want peace for tomorrow, for our future, all over the world. We should hereby dedicate ourselves, our hearts and minds to world peace as our beloved leader King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan are doing as well as our spiritual leaders.

We believe that all mankind deserves a future free of the threat of nuclear war or any kind of war. We encourage peace between individuals and nations and clasp hands with people of the whole world in a global effort to preserve our planet.

Everybody is seeking a peaceful settlement and trying to strengthen any peace process; a dialogue is necessary to urge a peaceful solution to the current crisis.

The world should not give up hope of a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis. On this Christmas eve, we call on all Christians to pray for peace in the Middle East because if war happens, there will be fearful loss of lives and the scale of escalation is unpredictable.

The Christians should not keep silent, we call on those who celebrate Christmas, and particularly those who attend church on Christmas eve, to pray for peace in the Middle East, possibly observing two minutes of silence at midnight, and meditating on peace.

Our duty now is to reflect on the value of peace and the duty of Christians to preserve and foster it.

On this occasion I join my voice to the voice of the Holy Father who asks the Lord to console all those who in that sorely tried region of the world, are victims of injustice and violence. He strongly encourages all those of goodwill to promote a patient dialogue which will take into account the legitimate interests of each one, and place confidence in the human capacity to search for justice and peace.

In this context, following the teachings of Christ and the Gospel, we will bring our contribution of truth and charity to the social life of our country.

Now we stand on the threshold of a new world order. There are present in this moment seeds of a new era of international cooperation under the rule of international law based upon superior power.

On this Christmas eve, we would invoke the power of Jesus, symbol for us of love and hope. We must witness against weak resignation to the illogical pursuit of militarism and war.

We must witness to our belief in the capacity of human beings and human societies to seek and achieve reconciliation.

We commend this message to all persons of goodwill, inviting them to join us in continuing prayer and urgent action to avert war in the Middle East and to join in the quest for a just and durable peace in the Middle East and say with the angels: "Glory to God the Highest and Peace on earth to those of good will."

According to Abu Hassan, the committee comprises the minister of industry and trade, the minister of finance as well as Central Bank governor and the Amman Chamber of Industry president.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan has accepted to be honorary chairman of a committee organising and presenting the awards, Abu Hassan said.

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Amman Chamber of Industry is creating a King Hussein award for distinguished industrialists in recognition of their services to the Jordanian economy.

This was announced by Khalid Abu Hassan, the chamber's president, who said that the award would be presented annually at a special ceremony where several smaller awards will also be presented to the industrialists.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan has accepted to be honorary chairman of a committee organising and presenting the awards, Abu Hassan said.

AMMAN (J.T.) — A Japanese official delegation now on a visit to Jordan has expressed its full understanding and appreciation of the work conducted here by a government committee caring for the evacuees from the Gulf, and said it would relay to the Japanese government a picture of the situation.

Speaking at a meeting with the head of the government committee for evacuees, Salameh Hamad, delegation members said they would urge the Japanese government to contribute towards solving problems related to the evacuees and the camps which host them in Jordan.

The Japanese government will also be informed about the financial difficulties encountered by the Jordanian committee and the urgent needs to help host the evacuees, especially during the winter season.

Salameh Hamad briefed the delegation on health transport and other services offered to the evacuees passing through Jordan, and presented the delegation with a plan that would help Jordan handle further numbers of evacuees in case of new developments in the Gulf region, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

It said that Hamad had also briefed the delegation members on the difficulties the committee

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Influx of Soviet Jews to help Israel's economy, military — economist

AMMAN (J.T.) — The influx of Soviet Jews to occupied Palestine is bound to greatly boost Israel's armed forces capabilities since all Soviet able-bodied men acquire military service according to Soviet laws, a noted Jordanian economist said here Monday.

At the same time, the Israeli government can make use of the newcomers to fill the post of Arab workers at Israeli plants

from which the Arabs are being turned away," said Burhan Dajani in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, commenting on the ongoing Soviet Jewish immigration.

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with the world Zionism has closed the door before Soviet Jewish immigrants, forcing them to go to the occupied Palestinian land where they are being settled on Arab territories with American financing.

"The influx of thousands of Jews every month is bound to help the Israeli government to evict the Arab population from their homeland so as to settle the newcomers," Dajani pointed out.

"At the same time the influx of the Soviet Jews into Palestine will help compensate for the opposite emigration of Jews from Israel to other countries, a process which has been increasing over the past few years as more and more Jews are becoming frustrated with life inside Israel," Dajani said.

He also said that Israel's mounting economic problems

have mainly resulted from the Jewish state's inability over the past 10 years to expand Israel's borders.

The influx of Jews, he said, was considered by the Zionist leaders as a means to help the Jewish state expand and contribute towards the fulfilment of Israel's dreams.

Dajani's statement followed a plan disclosed by Israel's economy minister, David Magen, who said last Thursday that he had won wide government backing for a plan that would dismiss nearly two thirds of the 108,000 Palestinians now employed in Israeli businesses and factories.

Magen said that his plan was designed to free jobs for Soviet Jewish immigrants and reduce the number of Palestinians coming to Israel at a time of increased resistance activities.

AMMAN (Petra) — The Upper House of Parliament held a meeting Monday in the presence of Prime Minister Mudar Badran and Cabinet members to endorse several amendments to existing laws.

A general debate on an amendment to the income tax law was held between the prime minister and several House members.

Badran stressed that his government was keen on enforcing social justice through a fair income tax law which would deal with various sectors and individuals in terms of their income.

The Lower House's Legal Committee also met Monday to discuss a law on axial weights. The Public Freedoms Committee met to review the issue of employees dismissed from their work for political reasons, and heard a report on the political detainees in the light of a visit by committee members to Jordanian jails.

Prime Minister Mudar Badran told Parliament on Dec. 19 that 68 per cent of the total number of 544 employees dismissed for political reasons had been reinstated, and that the rate would reach 90 per cent before the end of the year.

The House's Health and Environmental Safety Committee also held a meeting and decided to start a programme of visits to the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) to study ways to stem environmental pollution, and visits to the cement factory, the phosphate mines and Aqaba Port. They also decided to tour hospitals to study their situation and services.

Dr. Hind Dawani, at a seminar entitled "Prevention and Early Detection of Handicaps in Pre-School Children" held at the Institute for Child Health and Development, emphasised that women, especially young mothers, should visit their gynaecologists even before they get pregnant to ensure a safe pregnancy.

"Pregnant teenage mothers are children themselves," Dr. Dawani said. "And children bearing children must be informed about the medical supervision necessary for mother and child safety during and after pregnancy."

The two-day seminar is the first in a series aiming to increase the awareness of mothers, and improving maternity and child care service facilities.

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Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1975

الجزيرة الأردنية السياسية اليومية المستقلة المنشورة بالإنجليزية من المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية

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University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

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Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 661242

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
Jordan Times advertising department.

Day for peace

IT IS Christmas Day once again and its spirit and message have never been more pertinent and applicable than in these troubled times. In essence Christmas sends a universal message to all mankind that peace and goodwill are much more sublime than war and vengeance. It is thus a propitious occasion to reflect individually and collectively on the course we choose to pursue in times when confrontation looks all too inevitable. The message of Christmas is certainly applicable to the Gulf crisis where man is feverishly preparing for catastrophe instead of solving problems. The meaning of the holidays to even more applicable to world leaders, the likes of U.S. President George Bush, who have yet to comprehend its spiritual import and relevancy in coping with international and regional conflicts. The spiritual issue that President Bush is called upon to address on Christmas Day and before he orders his troops to fire on Iraqi soldiers is whether there is a moral case for war. Christmas Day is then a day for him and like-minded leaders to engage in soul searching in order to arrive at honest answers to the crisis in the Gulf.

The White House should listen in particular to the church leaders who have just ended a fact finding mission to the Middle East and the Gulf region and came back solidly against launching a war to rectify a situation that admittedly needs a just and equitable solution. Their voice is the voice of Christmas and Bush of all people should heed their counsel instead of wrapping himself up with hate and vengeance towards his fellow men in Iraq or elsewhere in the world. And the best Christmas gift that the U.S. chief executive can get is to deny him congressional consent to wage war over the Kuwaiti situation. Senator Mitchell, the Democratic congressional leader has unwittingly perhaps, offered such a gift to the White House when he announced Sunday that President Bush may not count on getting congressional agreement to start a war against Iraq. This way President Bush has an opportunity to save face by shifting the blame on the U.S. Congress for denying him the opportunity to begin armed hostilities over the Gulf crisis and the U.S. congressmen would in turn be credited with saving their peoples and the peoples of the Earth from an unnecessary war. Meanwhile Iraq is also called upon to keep the doors for reasonable compromises wide open in order to lend support to those forces which are aiming to frustrate the military option. It can do so by spelling more clearly its terms for a compromise solution for all the international community to comprehend and appreciate.

This is the time to exchange gestures of good will instead of threats, and to think of and work for solutions as an alternative to sliding towards war and catastrophe. Let us all be seized by this opportunity to make peace. Merry Christmas.



ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

It is the United States and not Iraq which will be responsible for the consequences should a war break out in the Gulf because it is the U.S. president who seems to be determined to follow the course of aggression, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily Monday. The whole world realises that 10 days after it invaded Kuwait, Iraq called for the implementation of the international legitimacy and the U.N. Security Council resolutions with regard to all issues in the Middle East, said the paper. For its part the United States has so far taken a different course and has been intent on issuing threats against Iraq disregarding Baghdad's call for the implementation of the international legitimacy and respect for the U.N. Charter with respect to all issues on equal footing, the paper noted. At the moment, the paper added, the United States and its allies are spreading a dangerous notion in the mind of the world, alleging that the key to a solution to the Gulf crisis is in the hand of the Iraqi leadership and Baghdad is responsible for peace or war. Washington aims to place the blame squarely on Baghdad for any hostilities that might ensue from now, even though Washington and its allies could be behind the provocations, the paper pointed out. Washington, the paper said, is trying hard to force its will on Iraq and to capitulate and succumb to U.S. dictates; and for this reason, said the paper, it should shoulder the responsibility for any eventuality.

Al Dustour daily also dwelt on Washington's continued threats to launch war after Jan. 15 in case Iraq did not withdraw its troops from Kuwait, noting that American officials have stepped up their warnings to Iraq hoping to subdue its will. The paper said that Washington has chosen to cancel the dialogue with Baghdad in a bid to exercise pressure on the Iraqi people and intimidate its leadership. As long as Washington insists on dealing with Iraq through threats instead of negotiations, it will sooner or later drag the whole world behind it in a dangerous adventure that would cause a world wide catastrophe, said the paper. It said Iraq has been demanding an international conference and negotiations for settling all the region's issue, and we believe that Europe is most eligible at the moment to handle such an important task because it is more acceptable to the Arabs in view of their bilateral historic ties. For this reason, the paper said, we still hope that the Algerian president's moves in Europe and his talks with French and Italian leaders would bring about a European initiative.

The View from Fourth Circle

The message from the Arab World

By Rami G. Khouri

MANY Americans see the present crisis in the Middle East as the latest sign of chronic Arab/Muslim disarray, violence, instability, tyrannical and megalomaniacal rulers, and anti-American or anti-Israeli sentiment. The American government promises a new era of Mideast stability after the power of Iraq is crushed for good. The view from within much of the Arab World is considerably different.

Certainly, the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait offends our common sense of morality and commitment to international law, and should be reversed and resolved, preferably without warfare. Yet, beneath the tensions of the Gulf conflict lie a far deeper reality of widespread demand for human and political change in the Arab World. Americans should not miss this as they have missed so many other Mideast realities in recent years. Kuwaiti sovereignty must be restored, to be sure; but to focus narrowly on the crisis of Kuwait while ignoring the broader underlying Arab realities is to seek to fix the kitchen sink while the rest of the house is burning out of control.

The widespread Arab support for Iraq in its confrontation with the American-led forces in the Gulf did not spring out of a vacuum. It should be seen in its correct historical context. It stems from a growing realisation by the politically devastated Arab and Muslim people of the region that we can turn to our own identity and resources for the dignity that has been denied us by the post-colonial political order — an order installed by the British and French after World War I, and useful for the Israeli-American combine since World War II, but which has been a colossal failure for Arabs and Muslims in all spheres of life.

Politically, most Arab countries since the 1950s have suffered autocratic domestic systems which have denied their people's yearning for democracy, human rights and justice. Economically, the region's unnatural and untenable imbalances culminated in the 1980s in massive region-wide regression, intolerable foreign debt, severe economic adjustment, and declining real standards of

living. Regionally, the Arab World has been characterised by rising frustration with the inability to deal with the challenge of Israel, and by the failure to give expression to grassroots sentiments of a single, pan-Arab national identity. And internationally, the Arab World has been a sad sideshow of nominally sovereign entities used as pawns by great powers locked in a global ideological confrontation.

Throughout the Arab Middle East, as well as in neighbouring non-Arab Muslim states such as Turkey, Pakistan and Iran, powerful indigenous discontent with the politically non-democratic and economically inequitable order spawned the two most important regional political trends of the past decade: Islamic fundamentalism and democratic pluralism. Both are signs of a profound desire for change — for democracy and human rights, for social equity, for regional economic integration, for accountability of public officials, for morality in public life, for the fair application of international law and U.N. resolutions to all conflict situations, and for a new regional order characterised by honesty, dignity, justice and stability.

For us, the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait and the swift, massive Western military response instantly revived the gruesome penchant of Western powers to seek to maintain a Middle East status quo which was largely created by Western hands after 1915, and which has brought only failure, frustration and humiliation to three generations of Arabs.

The message from much of the Arab World — especially from the nascent democracies in Jordan, Algeria, Yemen, Tunisia and other societies where Arabs can express themselves freely, and where support for Iraq against the militarism of the West is greatest — is that we will not be the world's last colonies. We will not suffer in perpetuity a degrading and failed political order which has successfully served the colonial interests of Great Britain and France, the security interests of Israel, the commer-

cial interests of American-led Western oil companies, weapons manufacturers, corporations and banks, and the grotesque personal wealth of fantastic, super-rich, unelected, non-accountable and often corrupt elites.

The overthrow of the Shah of Iran in 1979 was the first sign of the power which the people of the Middle East realised they could muster in the face of superior military force. It was followed soon after by the Lebanese National Resistance's eviction of the American marines from Lebanon, and, since December 1987, the Palestinian intifada against Israeli occupation. Those Arabs who stand up to the massive militarism of the West today have simply taken this fearlessness onto a much larger regional stage.

They derive personal strength and historical validity from the fact that superior military power could not prevail for the Shah, Marcos, the Duvaliers, Ceausescu and Somozas, the apartheid regime in South Africa, the Americans in Vietnam, or the Soviets in Afghanistan. Neither can it prevail in the Gulf today, for gone are the days when Western powers can send their armies half way around the world to preserve a political order which has failed the national, emotional and material aspirations of hundreds of millions of indigenous people in the Third World.

The Iraqi occupation of Kuwait is the only latest perverse action in a region populated by people who have been pervasively treated by Western military powers and indigenous power elites for most of this century.

Washington and London suddenly woke up to the political travesties and human tragedies of the Middle East four months ago. We've been living with them for three generations. We wish to live with them no more.

Editors Note: A slightly shorter version of this article appeared in the New York Times and the International Herald Tribune last week.

A dose of reality after initial elation

By J.E. Heintz
The Associated Press

THE year began with intoxicating changes in many regions and ended soberly, with a bewildering array of problems.

Eastern Europe was embroiled in ethnic, political and economic problems after throwing off decades of repression. The United States and other wealthy nations saw their economies pale. And the year closed with soldiers from many nations poised in Saudi Arabia for a possible war with Iraq over its seizure of Kuwait.

The European Community took formal steps toward economic unification — a move mirrored when workmen under the English Channel linked the two halves of a tunnel that will connect Britain with France.

But technology did not always work smoothly. The United States' hubble telescope went into space with a flaw that ruined much of its capability to see the heavens and the U.S. space shuttle programme was beset with hydrogen leaks.

The environment was a growing concern. Threats facing the planet include green-



Edvard Shevardnadze

The political world lost Jose Napoleon Duarte, who tried to lead El Salvador out of its violent despair. Le Duc Tho, who negotiated the United States' withdrawal from Vietnam, and Armand Hammer, a citizen-diplomat with close contacts in the Kremlin and on Wall Street.

Elation coursed through Eastern Europe in early 1990 as its citizens luxuriated in the fall of totalitarianism in East Germany, Bulgaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Poland. The elections that would oust the communists in Hungary were just months away.

Poland opened the year with a bold "shock therapy" programme aimed at resuscitating a devastated economy, but the quick transition to a market-driven economy threw many people out of work and caused alarming price rises.

The Solidarity movement — whose decade-long fight had brought down the communists — splintered, and Lech Walesa defeated prime minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki, his former comrade, for president of the country.

Bulgaria and Romania held their first democratic elections in nearly half a century, and outraged voters took to the streets when former communists won the balloting. Miners called out by Romania's president brutally broke up a protest in Bucharest.

German reunification in 1990 had immense ramifications for all of Europe. But residents of the former East Germany faced price hikes and severe unemployment in the merger with booming West Germany. Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who engineered unification, was returned to office in December to lead the country out of its new difficulties.

The Soviet Union undertook remarkable steps: It enacted laws allowing political pluralism and freedom of religion and the press, the Communist Party stopped opposing private property and abandoned other key principles. But as central control relaxed, all the country's republics demanded sovereignty or outright independence and ethnic tensions flared. Soviet troops stormed the capital of Azerbaijan to put down an uprising caused by enmity against both the Kremlin and neighbouring Armenia.

Meanwhile, the Soviet economy sank further into entropy. An unparalleled bread shortage plagued Moscow and, despite a good harvest, the country entered its long winter, with appeals for food from



Saddam Hussein

1990



George Bush

other countries. Paradoxically, as President Mikhail Gorbachev was leading the country to new freedoms — and winning the Nobel Peace Prize — the Soviet legislature was giving him new powers to try to cope



Helmut Kohl

with the economic disintegration. Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, a close ally of Gorbachev, abruptly resigned on Dec. 20 with a warning to parliament: hard-liners were pushing the country toward dictatorship.

But as the Soviet Union became enmeshed in domestic problems, it cut back on its global military role, announcing troops pullouts from Europe and Asia and presiding over the Warsaw Pact's transformation into a primarily political body.

That left the United States to take the leading role in the Gulf crisis that broke out after Iraq invaded and annexed Kuwait in August.

U.S. President George Bush quickly responded by mounting a huge military buildup in Saudi Arabia, and other countries also sent troops. Iraqi President Saddam Hus-



Margaret Thatcher

sein released thousands of foreign hostages in December, and Baghdad and Washington sparred over when to hold talks.

Tension grew with the approach of the Jan. 15, 1991, deadline set by the United Nations for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait or face the possibility of military force.

As the United States faced the possibility of an unpopular war, it also was struggling with a declining economy. A recession loomed, and other countries also felt the effects of a worldwide downturn.

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who had led Britain's economic rebound in the 1980s, abruptly resigned, brought down by dissatisfaction within her party over inflation, high interest rates and a new poll tax.

Turbulence in the Mideast extended beyond the Gulf. Israel had to contend with the 3-year-old Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories. In the most violent incident, Israeli police killed over 21 Palestinian demonstrators in East Jerusalem. Disagreement over the Palestinian question brought down the coalition government of Yitzhak Shamir, but the opposition couldn't form a new government and Shamir, a rightist, returned to power.

In Lebanon, one of the world's most intractable conflicts abated. The militias that had partitioned Beirut agreed to pull out of the capital — after the forces of renegade Christian Gen. Michel Aoun were defeated — and the infamous green line was dismantled. However, the pullout did not solve the question of Syria's massive presence in the country, nor of Israel's self-proclaimed "security zone" in the south of the country.

In South Africa, the government took substantial steps to-

ward dismantling its apartheid system of racial separation — including the elimination of most segregated public facilities — and released black leader Nelson Mandela from prison after 28 years. But when Mandela returned home from a triumphant world tour, he was confronted by the horror of black-on-black fighting between supporters of his African National Congress and the rival Inkatha movement.

Nicaraguans voted the Marxist Sandinistas out of office and the Contra rebels disbanded, but the country's economic disintegration continued. By year's end the new government was facing widespread protests.

In Bangladesh, President Hussain Muhammad Ershad gave in to protesters and resigned. The president who is to be elected next year will be the first person chosen democratically to lead the impoverished, disaster-plagued country.

Haiti held its first democratic elections, and the Rev. Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a priest of the poor, won the presidency. But supporters of the former Duvalier dictatorship vowed to challenge the outcome.



Benazir Bhutto

Democracy made inroads in South America. Patricio Aylwin defeated authoritarian Gen. Augusto Pinochet for the presidency of Chile, and Fernando Collor de Mello became Brazil's freely elected leader. Peruvians elected Alberto Fujimori, a last-minute presidential candidate, in an expression of despair over economic collapse and a vicious left-wing guerrilla insurgency.

North Korea and South Korea began cautious but contentious contacts, bringing some hope that the peninsula might end its bitter division.

Liberia, a country founded by former slaves from the United States, sank into the grisly despair of a year-long civil war. President Samuel Doe was tortured and killed, and citizens starved in the streets of Monrovia while two rebel armies fought for dominance.

India, the world's largest democracy, seethed with ethnic fighting and class conflict. An outbreak of fighting between Hindus and Muslims over a temple site brought down the 11-month-old government of V.P. Singh. It was replaced by another fragile and fractious coalition.

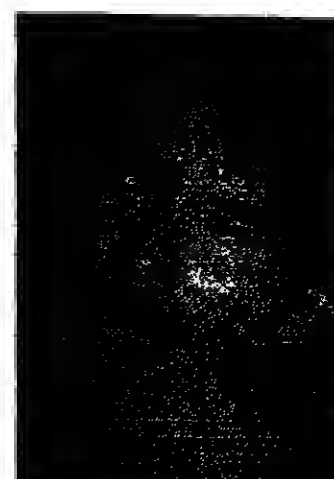
In Pakistan, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was ousted by the military after 20 months as the first female leader of a modern Muslim nation.



Hussein M. Ershad



Lech Walesa



Daniel Ortega

Santa has nothing to fear when he comes to Beirut this year

By Nadim Ladki
Reuters

Beirut — "Santa Claus will come to Beirut. He has nothing to fear, there is no war, there's peace now," said eight-year-old George Khouri.

For the first time in 15 years, the jolly, bearded secular symbol of Christmas will not have to worry about shellings, roadblocks, mines or being kidnapped while in the Lebanese capital.

Thousands of president Elias Hrawi's troops took control of the Muslim and Christian sectors of Beirut earlier this month, ridding it of rival, gun-ready, militias.

Army engineers toppled fortifications at the "green line" battle zone that divided the city for 15 years of civil war, clearing mines, opening roads and shifting barricades and rubble.

But it will take time to wipe out the scars of war in the children's minds.

When asked what he wants for Christmas, Khouri said: "I hope Santa brings me a machinegun."

Sobeil Nassar, manager of Toyfair Shop in Beirut, said most of his sales were electronic games, particularly war games.

"The security situation may be better this year...but we still sell all those war games," said Nassar adding that the high rate of inflation affected his

business.

"People are spending on repairing their homes and shops and not gifts," he said.

Rita Kisonarjes said she was selecting the presents for her two children this year despite their preferences. "They love toy guns — this time I am getting them educational games," she said.

Decorations in the Christian neighbourhoods of Beirut, the scene of fierce fighting earlier this year, are modest compared to ornaments in Muslim districts.

In the once-fashionable Hamra area, a shopping centre in the heart of the mainly-Muslim western sector of Beirut, green, red and silver decorations hang from buildings, poles and sidewalks.

Christmas ornaments hang in Hamra street, some above piles of rubble and near posters of militiamen who were among the tens of thousands killed in sectarian fighting.

In the bustling mar Elias Street, where most of the shop owners are Muslims, windows also display the trappings of the festive season.

"Christmas has become part of our tradition. It is not only a feast for Christians. Our Muslim clients are also swept by the Christmas spirit," said Omar Ardati, 29, a ceramics shop owner.

Elie Aizarani, who runs a gift shop, said business was booming because "people, Muslims and Christians alike,

just want to celebrate. After what they have lived through in the past few years, people are looking for excuses to party."

Ardati said economic hardships and the fall in the value of the Lebanese pound had affected sales. "People can barely afford to buy food so how about gifts."

For Christian refugees who sought shelter at the devastated "green line" battlezone that used to split Beirut, Christmas is merely a reminder of their sufferings.

One such family is the Ghazals who live in the one room remnant of what was once a three-storey building in downtown Beirut.

Like thousands of other Christians they were displaced from their village in the Druze-held Shouf mountains in 1983. They moved to a Christian district in Beirut but were forced out again during this year's inter-Christian battles.

"Everything is so expensive, we can barely afford to buy food let alone presents for the children," said Antoinette Ghazal, the mother of three youngsters.

Army bulldozers have been clearing rubble and bringing down badly damaged buildings near her home, reportedly to prepare for a huge rebuilding plan.

"If the state wants to rebuild the areas here, we will be left homeless. That's some Christmas present," she said



1991 — Punishment or compromise?

By Eileen Alt Powell
The Associated Press

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM

— For nearly three years, the Palestinian uprising consisted mainly of street battles in the occupied territories, a war of stones far removed from most Israelis' daily lives.

But a series of fatal stabbings on the streets of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem has brought the Arab revolt closer to home.

Growing fear among Israelis has prompted calls for harsh punishment of Arabs who attack Jews. It also has renewed debate over whether Israel should continue to occupy the West Bank and Gaza Strip, home to 1.7 million Palestinians.

The independent Israeli newspaper Yediot Ahronoth called this week for a solution "based on physical separation between us and the Palestinians."

The leftist Al Hamishmar said legislators' calls for the

death penalty and massive Arab expulsions would only worsen the conflict.

"The only solution lies in a separation of the two nations and a political settlement, which the government has been unable to reach," the paper said in an editorial.

Few believe the right-wing government of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir is prepared to yield any of the territory captured from Jordan and Egypt in the 1967 Middle East War. Only recently Shamir spoke of his Likud bloc's historic commitment to keeping all the land from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River.

But leftist Parliament Member Dedi Zucker, who advocates trading land for peace, believes growing anger and fear over the stabbings are shifting public opinion toward getting rid of the territories.

"I can't remember in the last

10 years when my argument was accepted so well among people that I meet," Zucker said in an interview. "They say, 'yes, there is no hope for us living together.'"

He warns that if a peace process is not launched soon, the anti-Israeli attacks may accelerate.

"I fear in the coming year we may witness some horrendous, horrible terror activity," Zucker said. It will be born, he said, out of "Palestinian desperation, a lack of hope."

From the December 1987 start of the Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation, leaders of the revolt discouraged the use of firearms and attacks on Jews inside Israel.

But the guidelines began collapsing after the Oct. 8 riots on Jerusalem, in which at least 17 Palestinians were killed by police gunfire.

The fundamentalist groups Islamic Holy War and Hamas, or Zeal, have since urged armed revenge for the deaths.

Palestinian journalist Daoud Kuttab said the massive use of live ammunition by police on

people armed only with stones had made many ordinary Arabs feel restraint on their part was useless.

"Some people now feel they can cross the green line," he said in a reference to the pre-1967 demarcation between Israel and the territories.

Since Oct. 8, seven Jews have been stabbed to death and at least 19 wounded in attacks by Palestinians inside Israel.

Palestinian anger over the Jerusalem massacres also has strengthened support for fundamentalist Muslim groups, which advocate the destruction of Israel, at the expense of the Palestine Liberation Organization, which has been pushing for a two-state solution.

"I am hoping the Israelis decide to do something with a credible organization that still has some weight or face the possibility it will be left with organizations it cannot deal with," Kuttab said.

Instead of compromise, however, right-wing politicians have responded to the latest

attacks by urging even stiffer retaliation against Palestinians.

After Hamas claimed responsibility for the latest stabbing deaths of three Israelis last week, the government ordered the deportation of four Hamas leaders and the arrests of hundreds of Muslim activists.

Defence Minister Moshe Arens promised that the deportations "will not be the last," and Science Minister Yuval Neeman urged expelling 1,000 uprising "ringleaders." Others demanded banning all 110,000 Palestinian workers from entering Israel.

Israeli military analyst Zeev Schiff believes such tactics will backfire.

"Israel is still at the stage where many in the public feel that an angry reply will solve the problem," he wrote in the daily Haaretz. "But it is clear that we are nearing a critical stage, where more and more people will understand that it is impossible to solve a civil war through military means only and that we need aggressive political steps."

various delegations from Western and Eastern countries and with U.S. officials, I see the full picture and the danger that may engulf Iraq."

Bethlehem

(Continued from page 1)

The holiday festivities went sour for 6,200 French troops when Saudi authorities banned two Christmas rock concerts. Visiting Defence Minister Jean-Pierre Chevenement cancelled a meeting with his Saudi counterpart.

Regular Christian worship is being openly conducted by military chaplains, or lay leaders for U.S. and allied Western forces operating in international waters of the Red Sea and the Gulf in nearby emirates.

Diek Cheney that a war against Iraq may be drawing closer.

He said that should hostilities break out, the Iraqi people would suffer massive losses.

Muharak, who met Sunday with Cheney during the defence secretary's visit en route home from Saudi Arabia, said: "Nobody will benefit from such a war. A very large number of Iraqi people will die."

Muharak deplored Iraq's refusal to withdraw from Kuwait. The president also hacked Cheney's view that as the Jan. 15 deadline for the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait was drawing closer, there was no sign of such a pullout.

"I wish the Iraqis would realise that the situation is fraught with danger."

"Through my meetings with

Benjedd

(Continued from page 1)

disagree by countering that Baghdad could not have made such "an unguaranteed" concession while Washington was stepping up its rhetoric and military build-up in the region.

Some analysts believe that Benjedd has a better chance of talking Baghdad into accepting a compromise if he manages to propel a French-led European diplomatic process that will practically build up pressure on Washington to address all the problems of the region.

With the approach of the Jan. 15 deadline set by the U.N. Security Council for

Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait or face war, prospects do not seem encouraging for reaching a breakthrough.

But some Arab officials, including Jordanians, are optimistic that the current diplomatic flurry will create a momentum to delay or even drop the war option.

This line of thinking is based on an assessment that war will backfire against American interests in the region and that it is in the interest of Europe to bolster its relations and position in the region.

Foreign Minister Marwan Al Qasem warned Monday that the U.S. risks losing its friends and allies in the event of a military conflict in the Gulf.

Tel Aviv

(Continued from page 1)

Attempts to hold talks between Baghdad and the United States have apparently failed because of bickering over a date.

"(The Iraqi government) is open to meet and enter into a dialogue with all parties who are effective in bringing about a peaceful settlement in the region but in the meantime of course we are standing by to face the worst possibilities as well," Anhari said.

"After all Iraq has the interests of the Arab Nation as its highest priority, even above our own interests," he said.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak Monday echoed warning by U.S. Defence Secretary



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Jordan Times

JORDAN MARKET PLACE

Soccer dulls image with lackluster World Cup

By Brian Truswell
The Associated Press

AFTER years of being hurt by repeated fan violence, soccer damaged its own image in 1990 with a dull, defensive World Cup and an inability to develop a plan to reverse the trend.

In years past, soccer took a beating over events such as the Heysel Stadium riots in 1985 and the Hillsborough tragedy in 1989.

But in 1990, the first 1-0 final in the 60-year history of the World Cup, and one in which the only goal was scored on a penalty kick, dampened the spirit of even some of the most ardent soccer fans.

Unless, of course, you were German.

West Germany's victory over Argentina set off wild celebrations from Berlin to Bonn three months before unification with East Germany.

"This was more violent than the revolution," said East German resident Helmut Klemm, "said of the marauding fans. 'Why can't they just root for the team?'"

Andreas Brehme's 79th minute penalty kick lifted West

Germany to its third World Cup, but the victory in Rome wasn't without controversy or criticism.

Noe of the criticism was leveled at West Germany, a pre-tournament favorite that was one of the few teams praised for its overall attractive style of play.

FIFA took the brunt of the criticism. Defending champion Argentina claimed the World Cup final was "fixed," and others said soccer's ruling body should have acted against defensive tactics which led to an all-time low 2.21 goals per game average, nearly a goal less than the 3.10 average of all of the World Cups combined.

Some criticized Argentina for seemingly playing for ties in the single elimination rounds with the hope of winning on penalty kicks.

However, Argentina wasn't alone in its tactics. In the preliminary round of Group F, all but one game involving England, the Netherlands, Ireland and Egypt ended in a 1-1 or 0-0 tie.

FIFA tried to address the problem before the World Cup, altering the off-side rule. The "even is now on-side" amend-

ment, coupled with a red card for the so-called "professional foul" were adopted in the hope of encouraging scoring.

It didn't. Other ideas were handed about: Increasing the dimensions of the goal, eliminating the off-sides rule and reducing the number of players.

But with pundits claiming it was not the game at fault, but the way coaches teach it, and that the proposed changes were only to appease a soccer-illiterate U.S. audience, the suggestions met considerable resistance.

And without a United Front or consensus, it appears little change is likely for the 1994 World Cup in the United States. However the World Cup in Italy did have its moments.

From its opening upset of Argentina — where it used rough marking of star striker Diego Maradona — Cameroon's incredible run was a marvel, climaxed by its dramatic 3-2 overtime quarterfinal loss to England.

Roger Milla, who came out of retirement at 38, led his country to inspired play, including a 2-1 extra time victory over Col-

ombia in the second round. Elsewhere, Salvatore Schillaci came off the bench twice in the first round to spur victories and scored a tournament-high seven goals to lead Italy into the semi-finals.

Despite the criticism, "half of the human race watched soccer at least once," said Italia '90 head Luca de Montezemolo.

Except, in the United States, where television ratings were poor.

Partially to blame for the low ratings was the poor performance of the U.S. team, which made its first appearance in the finals in 40 years.

An opening game 5-1 to Czechoslovakia, a respectable 1-0 loss with host Italy and a 2-1 loss to Austria (despite a two-man advantage at the end of the game), placed the United States 23rd out of 24 teams and generated little interest at home.

One plus for the World Cup was that feared massive violence, particularly from English fans, never materialized. With the English national team exiled to the island of Sardinia, only half of the expected 8,000 English fans made the trip and they were met with an almost equal

police presence.

Bars and liquor stores were closed up to 72 hours before, during and after matches. But it wasn't a World Cup completely void of bootlegging.

One of the worst incidents involved German fans, who smashed shops in Milan. About 100 were arrested, 44 sent home and five sentenced to two years in jail.

Apart from the World Cup, there were sporadic outbreaks of fan violence in Europe, most notably in newly unified Germany, particularly in the East. One young fan was shot and killed by police, who were trying to break up riots in Leipzig after a game.

Political problems also fuelled violence in Yugoslavia, where a game between league champion Red Star Belgrade and runner-up Dynamo Zagreb ended in a riot and suspended the season.

On a positive note, England finally returned to European Cup competition as a five-year ban on English clubs was lifted. Aston Villa and Manchester United became the first clubs from England to play on the continent since the 1985 Champions Cup riots at Heysel Stadium in Brussels, Belgium.

On the field at least, Italy demonstrated its dominance of club play by capturing all three European Cups: Napoli in the Cup Winners' Cup, Sampdoria in the UEFA Cup and AC Milan successfully defending its Champions Cup title.

AC Milan also triumphed again in the Toyota Intercontinental Cup, beating Olimpia of Paraguay 3-0 in Tokyo.

Olimpia advanced to the one-game Toyota Cup, generally viewed as the World Club Championship, by surviving a highly controversial protested Libertadores Cup tournament that was marred by threats of bribery and intimidation.

The biggest of the scandals broke in the quarterfinals. The South American Soccer Confederation voided Atletico Nacional's 2-0 victory over Brazil's Vasco Da Gama on Aug. 29 in Medellin, Colombia.

The action was taken because referee Juan Daniel Cardellino was threatened with death if he didn't ensure a Atletico victory. The match was replayed, and Atletico still won 1-0, but the confederation also banned Colombia from hosting any confederation-sanctioned games.

Foreman ends 1990 as 'big' man in boxing

By Ed Schuyler Jr.
The Associated Press

JAMES "Buster" Douglas pulled arguably the biggest boxing upset ever in 1990, but by year's end the big man in the sport was George Foreman.

Evander Holyfield was the undisputed heavyweight champion, but the people's choice seemed to be Foreman, who was the champion of the middle-aged fan and had the spread that goes with middle age.

Foreman, who held the world title in 1973-74, was scheduled to challenge Holyfield on April 19. By then "Big George" will be 43 years old and probably on the other side of 250 pounds (113 kilograms).

Douglas was a 42-1 underdog when he challenged unbeaten Mike Tyson on Feb. 11 at Tokyo. The fight ended in the 10th round, with "Iron Mike" counted out.

It also ended in controversy. Promoter Don King and Tyson's corner contended that Douglas got a long count after being knocked down in the eighth round because the referee failed to pick up the timekeeper's count at three and instead began counting at one.

Douglas, who watched and listened to the referee's count, the only one a boxer is concerned about, got up at nine. The bell then ended the round.

Douglas went on to defend the title against Holyfield on Oct. 25 at Las Vegas and badly tarnished his shining moment in Tokyo.

Obviously out of condition — he weighed 246 pounds (111.5 kilograms) compared the 231½ (105 kilograms) he weighed in

Tokyo — Douglas did little for two rounds, then got knocked out by a right hand from the unbeaten Holyfield in the third round.

Douglas' showing was generally described as a take-the-money-and-run performance. His purse was \$19.9 million.

At the end of the year, Dan Duva, Holyfield's promoter, was in litigation with the World Boxing Council (WBC) and Tyson over a WBC edict to withdraw championship recognition from Holyfield for failing to make his first defense against Tyson. The issue appeared headed for arbitration.

The International Boxing Federation (IBF) and the World Boxing Association agreed to sanction the Holyfield-Foreman fight on the condition the winner next fight the top-ranked contender available. Tyson, who is ranked no. 1 by all three governing bodies, followed his loss to Douglas with first-round knockouts of Henry Tillman and Alex Stewart.

Foreman, who talks about eating as much as he talks about fighting, woo all five of his 1990 fights by knockout, making his record 24-0, with 23 knockouts, since he needed a 10-year retirement in 1987.

"I'm on a sea-food diet. I see food and I eat it," said Foreman, whose fighting weight in 1990 was in the low 260s (about 118 kilograms) he said he'll weigh about 250 pounds (113 kilograms) when he fights Holyfield.

While there are a lot of jokes about Foreman's waistline, his punching power is no laughing matter. Some boxing observers feel Foreman hits as hard and, in



George Foreman

fact, more accurately than he did in his first boxing life before he became an Evangelist.

One of foreman's five victories was a second-round knockout over former contender Gerry Cooney. Another was a second-round knockout of Addison Rodriguez, which was the first half of a doubleheader with the Tyson-Tillman fight.

While Foreman continued to outpoint the arch-enemy of any boxer, father time, Doovvan "Razor" Ruddock emerged as major force in the heavyweight division. The Jamaica native, who lives in Canada, scored

three knockout victories, including an impressive fifth-round KO of Michael Dokes, a former WBA champion.

Ruddock is ranked no. 2 behind Tyson by all three major organizations.

Douglas' upset of Tyson certainly was the fight with the biggest impact, but the best fight of 1990 might have been Julio Cesar Chavez' comeback victory over Meldrick Taylor on March 17 in which Chavez gained IBF junior welterweight title recognition. He already was recognized as 116-pound (53-kilogram) champion by the WBC.

Chavez, a dominant fighter of the 1980s, had a narrow lead on one official card, but was far behind on the other two after 11 rounds. The Mexican needed a knockout to avoid his first defeat.

With the round drawing to a close, Chavez knocked down Taylor who struggled up. Referee Richard Steele, however, stopped the fight with two seconds remaining. Steele's action touched off a controversy, but there was no doubt Taylor had taken a physical beating. He suffered dehydration, swallowed two pints of blood, had the small bones around the left eye fractured and required hospitalization.

Chavez won his other three fights and finished the year with a 73-0 record, with 60 knockouts.

Only one other champion was recognized by the IBF, WBA and WBC. That was Pernell Whitaker, who won four bouts and added the WBA lightweight title by knocking out Juan Nazario in the first round.

Porto stays top in Portugal

LISBON (R) — Two goals from Brazilian defender Geraldao kept champions Porto two points clear at the top of the Portuguese Soccer League but Benfica and Sporting Lisbon also won to stay in contention.

Geraldao converted a 22nd-

minute penalty and headed the second after 66 minutes as the European Cup quarter-finalists beat newly-promoted Gil Vicente 2-0.

The visitors protested furiously over the penalty, awarded after the ball struck a player's hand in the area.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1990

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: The Moon in Taurus, square Saturn this morning isn't the morning to force pending issues or in attempt to sidestep obstacles that are standing directly in front of your path. Use charm and tact and consider others.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You have a considerable number of annoying chores that need to be done so don't lose time but get at them and get them in back of you right away.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) This is your time to make sure that you do seek out some friends with the same interests as your own and devise some sensible way to resolve problems.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You have some obligations that require careful consideration and attention and this is the time to get them in back of you so you can soon get ahead.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You find that there is much study and investigation needed in that project that does necessitate that you do not yet put into motion.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You have some obligations that require careful consideration and attention and this is the time to get them in back of you so you can soon get ahead.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Whatever you need in talk over

with partners should be done now in a very considerate fashion so do nothing on your own but by an agreement.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You can spend this day making your surroundings more attractive and your personal appearance more harmonious with what pleases those about you.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) The good times you have now should certainly cost you very little or you lose some of your security just for some temporary amusement.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Matters at your home can come to a pretty pass if you get into any disagreements with members of your own household so keep self-control.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) This is your time to make sure you use much care to avoid a lurking accident and to look into reports and eliminate errors right away.

AQUARIUS: (January 20 to February 19) Money, money seems at the root of any discord or unhappiness in take some time out to show you do value the security now yours and protect it.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) This is your time to take a good look at whatever does not please you that is personal in its nature and use good judgment to get out of this.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 1990

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Show others that you have it within your power to forge ahead in avenues of expression that require penetrating thought and dynamic action. Enjoy your holiday season and express your concern for others.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) A good friend can help you in getting out from under some problem that is of concern to you so don't hesitate to let him know what it is.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) A day when you can impress one in an important position with your talents which everyone may not see so don't hide your light but have a strong flame.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Now you find you have a brilliant new idea that you can present to an older friend who is in a position to help you get it so quietly tell him.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Look deep within yourself for the answer to what you can do to get that backing from an official that means so much in your right now.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Your desire for more cooperation from an unusual person is readily gained this day by your making some fresh new approach that fascinates all.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Whatever you would like in that necessitates more effort on your part is fine so be of service to

those seeking anything from you today.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Articles of charm, beauty, taste seem to be all about you now so enjoy them and do whatever work is required by you to make them happier.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) This is a wonderful day for you if you do go along with person and the present given you and show true affection for those around you.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Enjoy your home in the fullest now by going along with whatever members of your family do or suggest any you can have a happy time.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) This is your day to make sure you do show you are the one who calls and wishes others a Merry Christmas and give them a boost where it is appreciated.

AQUARIUS: (January 20 to February 19) A day when you have much control over circumstances because you are now endowed with so much charm so be sure in extend your magnetism.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Now you have a day when you can quickly have the romantic happiness or the support from one of whom you are fond and who helps you materially.

THE BETTER HALF.

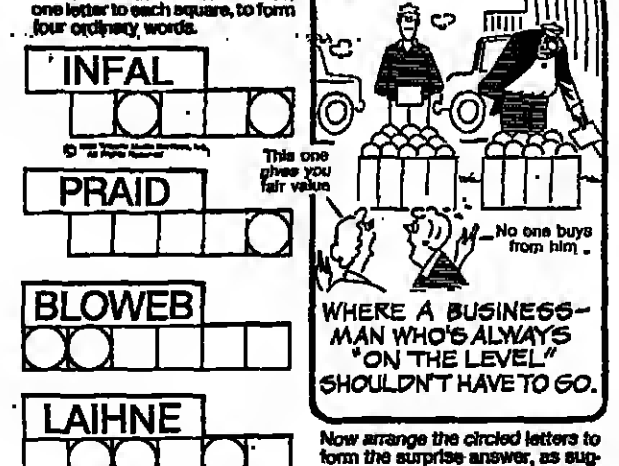
By Harris



"Do we know anyone who'd like a hot plate made out of spray-painted macaroni?"

JUMBLE.

Unscramble these four Jumble words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Print answer here: _____

Yesterday's Jumble: GORGE FAIRY DEMISE BUCKET

Answer: Often when you save up for a rainy day you end up getting this — "SOAKED"

GOVERN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAN HIRSCH
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ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠ Q53 ♠ A10 ♠ KQJ32 ♠ K93
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 1 NT Pass

What do you bid now?
A.—We are averse to raising partner's response with three-card support, but only when our better bid exists. Here, you have a balanced hand with solid stoppers in every suit. Clearly, one no trump is more descriptive than a raise to two spades.

Q.2—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠ A962 ♠ J82 ♠ KQ753 ♠ A
Partner opens the bidding with one diamond. What do you respond?
A.—Don't suppress a four-card major even though you have five-card support for partner's minor. Remember, four of a major on a 4-4 fit is preferable to an 11-trick minor-suit game. Therefore, start probing for the right strain by responding one spade.

Q.3—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠ A962 ♠ J82 ♠ KQ753 ♠ A
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
1 NT Pass ?
What do you bid now?

A.—Prospects for a major-suit game have dimmed. It's now time to investigate the possibility of a minor-suit slam. Jump to three diamonds to see what reaction that gets from partner. Unless you have a special partnership understanding, the jump is forcing to game.

Q.4—As South, vulnerable, you

hold:
♠ AQJ96 ♠ A43 ♠ K5 ♠ K3
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 1 NT Pass ?

What do you bid now?
A.—We want to be in game, so we are going to bid it. And in light of our unprotected king, we want the lead to come up to our hand, not through it. Certainly our suit is good enough, so we opt for four spades. Note that a jump to three spades would be merely invitational — and far too pusillanimous.

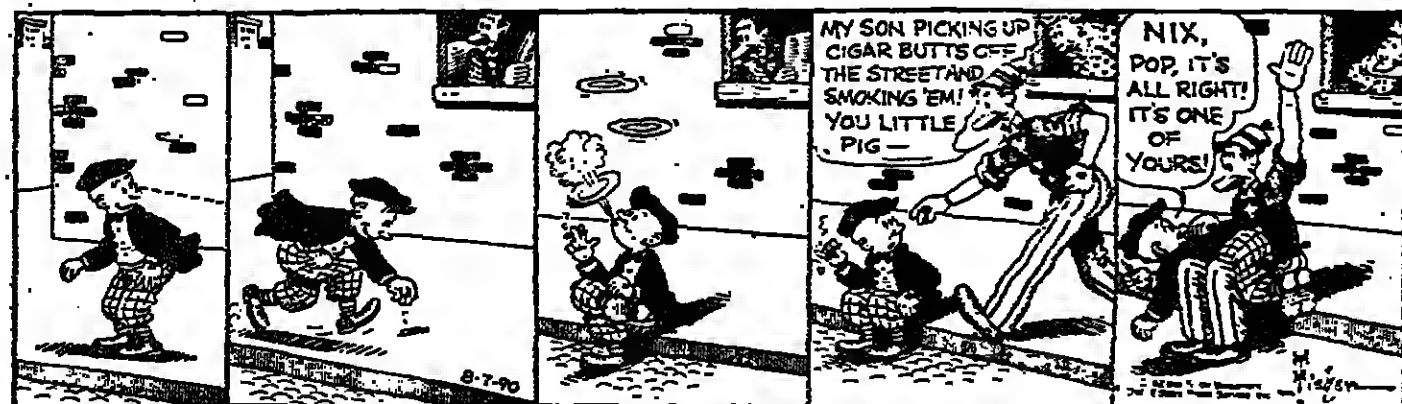
Q.5—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠ K6 ♠ K3 ♠ KQJ952 ♠ J52
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ DBT ?
What action do you take?

A.—We don't know how this one slipped in here. Surely all our readers know that, after an opponent has intervened with a takeout double, the only way to show a strong hand is to redouble. That's our choice — there's no other option.

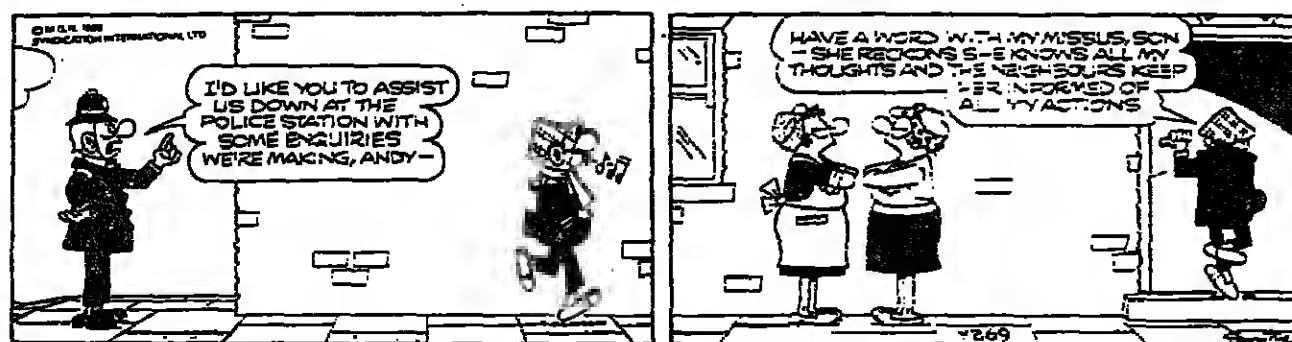
Q.6—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ A364 ♠ 7 ♠ J65 ♠ K963
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass ?
2 ♠ Pass ?
What action do you take?

A.—A very unpleasant hand. If partner is preparing to show a better-than-minimum opening by supporting spades next, we might have game. However, to investigate and then find the hand is a misfit could get us too high. The prudent course is to pass.

Mutt'n'Jeff



Andy Capp



Peanuts



OECD sees higher inflation and lower growth for Italy

ROME (R) — Italy, facing slower growth and higher inflation and interest rates next year, is likely to miss its target for cutting the budget deficit, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has said.

The OECD's half-yearly report said Italy's 1991 budget plan would cut the spending gap by less than hoped as higher interest rates raised the cost of financing government debt.

"Inflation and hence interest rates (next year) may be higher than expected by the authorities," the Paris-based economic forum of 24 industrial nations said.

"While given the habitual difficulties in controlling public spending, planned fiscal measures may not be fully implemented," the organisation said.

'American banks still face obstacles abroad'

Nevertheless, the report added, "the U.S. has also repeatedly stated that it will not hesitate to take vigorous action to promote or protect U.S. interests abroad if efforts to obtain national treatment fail."

The report, the fourth since 1979, examines the degree of national treatment afforded U.S. financial institutions in 21 banking and 18 securities markets in 27 countries or regions.

As required by law, Mulford said, "we're continuing bilateral discussions with foreign financial officials to build on the progress that's been made so far and to reduce remaining barriers."

The study summary made these observations: "Japan: 'despite modest improvements, a variety of factors have kept the Japanese banking market difficult to penetrate and the slow pace of liberalisation and deregulation has provided domestic banks with an unfair competitive advantage over foreign banks in both Japan and globally...'"

said in a report giving forecasts for Italy's economic performance over the next two years.

The OECD saw consumer price rises peaking at around an annual 7.25 per cent in the first half of 1991, before slowing under tough monetary policies and tighter fiscal restraint to end 1992 at some 5.25 per cent.

Italy's inflation rate, boosted by the sharp rise in world oil prices, was 6.5 per cent year-on-year in November 1990. The government sees it falling to an average five per cent in 1991.

Short-term interest rates, which largely set the cost of government borrowing, are also expected to peak early next year.

The OECD said Italy, which depends on imported oil for around 50 per cent of its energy needs, was particularly vulnerable to oil price shocks. Failure

to make progress in tackling the state deficit could erode business confidence.

Assuming world oil prices did not exceed \$27 a barrel on average over the two years, the OECD said it expected Italy's economic growth rate to slow to 2.5 per cent next year from 2.6 per cent in 1990.

Growth should accelerate again in 1992 with output rising between 2.5 and three per cent as businesses boosted investment and profits rose, the OECD said.

Unemployment is seen rising to 11.5 per cent by the end of 1992 from 11.1 per cent in 1990.

OIC appeals for economic aid to help Africans

JEDDAH (AP) — The Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) appealed Monday for more assistance to help African countries overcome acute economic difficulties.

"I appeal to the international community, particularly donor states and international financial institutions, to give priority consideration to the needs of economic and social development of the African states and increase substantially their financial assistance on concessional terms to Africa," said Secretary-General Hamid Al Gabid.

The OIC is umbrella for the world's Muslim population, which Saudi Arabian King Fahd recently estimated at 1.3 billion. More than half of the OIC's 15 members are African states.

Gabid recently concluded a tour of 12 African countries which, among others, included Chad, Niger, Gambia, Benin, Guinea and Sierra Leone.

"The economic crisis of Africa has now assumed an alarming proportion," he warned.

Gabid said the predicament of Africa's under-developed countries has been compounded by the negative repercussions of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Famine is another factor worsening the African economy.

"The Gulf crisis increased the prices of oil which most of the African countries import. The chronic famine further worsened the problems of these countries," the OIC chief said.

Gabid said the economic problems of Africa required total commitment of the donor countries and financial institutions.

"It is imperative that urgent and effective steps be taken to remove the multiple impediments to their economic recovery," he said.

Gabid also called for full implementation of U.N. programme for action on African economic development, and affirmed that the OIC would continue its own assistance in this respect.

"We believe that this is warranted not only by the existing bleak situation but also to realise our vision of a new international order which should promise peace and prosperity for all," he added.

Forbes lists most profitable companies

NEW YORK (AP) — Athletic footwear maker La Gear showed the best long-term profitability of public U.S. companies surveyed by Forbes, the magazine announced Sunday.

The Los Angeles-based company averaged an 83.2 per cent return on equity — primary earnings per share divided by common shareholders' equity per share — in the past four years, according to Forbes' calculations. In the last 12 months however, La Gear's return on equity fell to 27.8 per cent, the magazine said.

St. Louis-based Pulitzer Publishing ranked second with an 80.6 per cent average return on equity in the past five years. Atlanta-based chemical maker Georgia Gulf was third with 78.4 average return on equity in the past four years.

Forbes evaluated the profitability of 1,177 companies in 20 industries for its Jan. 7, 1991 annual report issue.

Software maker Microsoft Corp., based in Redmond, Washington, was ranked tops among the largest corporations. Microsoft had a return on equity average of 50.4 per cent over the past five years, which landed it in 16th place on the general list.

To be considered among the largest companies, a firm had to have sales of more than \$1 billion and a minimum five-year average return on equity of 22 per cent, among other requirements.

The median company in Forbes' survey had a five-year average return on equity of 14.6 per cent, up from 14.3 per cent in 1989. The latest 12-month return on equity for the firms dropped, however, from 14.4 per cent to 12.1 per cent.

Leading Forbes' list of best-performing stocks was Blockbuster Entertainment. The Fort Lauderdale, Florida-based video rental company had a five-year average stock price increase of 3,060.5 per cent, highest among the 1,078 stocks surveyed by Forbes.

Cyprus Minerals, an Englewood, Colorado-based oil, gas and coal company, had the highest rate of earnings-per-share growth with a three-year average of 147.3 per cent.

Tokyo drafts tight 91/92 budget

TOKYO (R) — Japan's finance ministry Monday proposed a tight budget for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 1991, with smaller increases in defence spending and overseas aid than the previous year, ministry officials said.

The proposed fiscal 1991 budget of 70.35 trillion yen (\$523 billion) represents a 6.2 per cent increase in spending over that planned for the current fiscal year. This compares with 9.6 per cent growth in 1990/91.

"Japan's fiscal situation remains grim in comparison to most other industrial countries," said Akihiko Matsutani, director of the research division of the ministry's budget bureau.

However, the ministry tried to allocate funds in such a way that will enable Japan to meet its expanding world role, Matsutani told reporters.

The ministry set a 5.8 per cent increase in overseas aid in the main government budget to about 865 billion yen (\$6.4 billion), slightly less than the 5.9 per cent increase projected in the current fiscal year.

But a final increase in overall overseas aid for 1991/92 would be about eight per cent, taking all funding into consideration, after a final 8.2 per cent rise planned for 1990/91, government sources said.

The ministry will now negotiate with spending departments on the details of the budget before the government comes up with a final draft Saturday.

"We believe that we shall have an overseas aid budget that amply reflects Japan's increasing international responsibilities," another ministry official told reporters.

The ministry budgeted a 5.1 per cent hike in defence spending for 1991/92, to about 4.37 trillion yen (\$32.3 billion), following a planned 6.1 per cent hike in 1990/91.

Defence spending will be less than one per cent of total economic output (gross national product) in 1991/92.

"Smaller growth in defence spending reflects an easing of global tensions combined with a tight fiscal environment," the official said.

The ministry officials cited anticipated slower growth in tax revenues and higher debt servicing costs among factors contributing to a tighter budget.

Higher interest rates and oil prices coupled with a plunge in stock prices this year cut into corporate profits, causing a slowdown in tax revenues.

However, the draft budget was not designed to stimulate the economy which is expected to remain buoyant. "The fiscal 1991 budget is neutral for the economy," said Matsutani.

Government and private economists say slower economic growth will help prevent a re-kindling of inflation.

Last Saturday the government predicted that gross national product (GNP) growth would slow to 3.8 per cent in real terms in 1991/92 from about 5.2 per cent in the current year.

The ministry forecast tax revenues to grow 6.5 per cent to 61.77 trillion yen (\$458 billion) in 1991/92, following a hefty 13.7 per cent increase planned for under the current fiscal year's budget.

Debt servicing costs in 1991/92 will account for 17 per cent of Japan's total expenditures as compared to a planned 14.3 per cent in the current year.

The total outstanding value of national bonds as of the end of fiscal 1990 is expected to reach 165 trillion yen (\$1.2 trillion), or about as large as the grand total of external debt obligations of developing nations.

New bond issues, which normally tend to match Japan's annual budget deficit, will be cut by 250 billion yen (\$1.85 billion) to 5,343 trillion yen (\$39.6 billion) in the ministry's draft budget.

However, the reduction in new bond issues was far less than the 400 billion yen (\$3 billion) which Japan has to cut annually

to achieve its goal of reducing government bond issues over the next five years to below five per cent of national revenues, from a budgeted 8.5 per cent in 1989/90.

"I wanted to see new bond issues cut by 400 billion yen," Finance Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto told a news conference Sunday.

The finance ministry also allocated a special fund of 200 billion yen (\$1.5 billion) to carry out its pledge to Washington to boost public works spending over the 10 years starting in fiscal 1991.

The U.S. has pressed Japan to spend more on public works in hopes that this will boost imports of American goods.

The ministry budgeted a six per cent increase in public works spending in the main government budget in 1991/92.

Asked if Washington will be pleased with the increase, the ministry's Matsutani said an expected 10 per cent increase in public works spending by local governments and a 9.6 per cent rise entered for in a special fiscal investment and loan programme will boost overall public works.

Overall public works spending in 1991/92 will be announced in late January.

"With these additional items for public works, we believe we are adequately meeting our responsibilities," Matsutani said.

Egypt's oil brings \$1 b in 6 months

CAIRO (AP) — Egypt's oil minister was quoted as saying Monday that Gulf crisis has enabled Egypt to reap \$1 billion in net profit from oil exports in the past six months, about three times as much as the budget forecast.

Abdul Hadi Kazdli said his ministry's budget estimate of export revenue for the current fiscal year, from July 1 to next June 30, was \$680 million, or about \$340 million for the six months ending Dec. 31.

Between July and December, he said, Egypt's net income from oil exports reached \$1 billion because of increased oil prices driven up by the Gulf crisis.

He said 17 new agreements for oil and gas exploration by foreign companies will be signed in 1991.

Declining dollar bottoming out but rising again next year

NEW YORK (R) — The once mighty dollar skidded this year to its lowest levels ever against some major currencies, but it should soon hit bottom and begin to climb again next year, according to experts.

The greenback, long sought around the world for its supposed safety and strength, has dipped as investors lost some of their faith in U.S. economic might.

Analysts who track the dollar and dealers who trade it say it is probably near its bottom. They point out that the stability of the United States still lends a basic attraction that should prevent the greenback from falling much further.

A major rebound does not appear on the cards, however. The experts said the dollar should begin its ascent next year, helped by a widespread view that the United States is regaining some of its economic lustre.

The lower dollar makes travel abroad and imported goods more expensive for Americans, but it also promotes exports by making U.S. goods relatively cheaper abroad.

Indeed, exports in October climbed to another record and, while the U.S. trade deficit hit a 2½ year high in the same month, economists said the value of oil imports should recede now that oil prices have come off their peaks since the start of the Gulf crisis. A weak economy should help trim the U.S. appetite for imports.

Analysts expect the dollar, which recently hit a record low of 1.4630 marks against a background of a faltering economy and falling interest rates, to decline further.

But currencies in Europe, particularly Germany, could well

lose some of their attraction as the economic and social costs of integrating eastern and western Europe start to overshadow potential gains.

"The word last year for what was happening in Europe was 'euphoria'. Now the word is 'dread'," Françoise Sores-Kemp, corporate trader at Credit Suisse, said. "This has got to give some money managers and portfolio managers some pause."

Japan, once the world's economic high flyer, has lost its glitter amid concern over the health of the real estate market and the country's economic future.

Nomura Research Institute, the research unit of Nomura Securities, recently issued a report advocating that Japanese investors move funds into the

U.S. stock market in the 1990s because it will be more desirable than others.

In addition, the U.S. economy, widely believed to be in recession after eight years of expansion, is expected to rebound next year, sooner than other major economies. That could push up interest rates, boosting the dollar's investment return.

"The United States is way ahead of everybody in terms of recession," said Leslie Nanberg, in charge of international fixed income at Massachusetts Financial Services.

The dollar has tumbled around 15 per cent since the start of the year against both the mark and the yen. It also has fallen to record lows against the Swiss franc.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Monday, December 24, 1990

Central Bank official rates

Buy Sell

U.S. dollar	664.0	668.0	Japanese yen (for 100)	390.1	493.0
Pound Sterling	1251.0	1258.5	Dutch guilder	385.0	387.3
Deutschemark	434.1	436.7	Swedish crown	116.2	116.9
Swiss franc	506.0	509.0	Italian lira (for 100)	97.6	97.9
French franc	127.6	128.4	Belgian franc (for 10)	210.4	211.7

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at mid-session on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Monday

One Sterling	1.8730/50	U.S. dollar	1.1594/604
One U.S. dollar	1.5395/15	Canadian dollar	1.7345/65
	1.3100/30	Deutschemark	1.3100/30
	31.75/85	Dutch guilder	5.2200/300
	1158/1160	Swiss franc	135.45/65
	135.45/65	Belgian franc	5.7370/470
	6.0100/200	French franc	6.0100/200
	5.9340/440	Italian lire	5.9340/440
One ounce of gold	382.50/383.50	Japanese yen	135.45/65
		Swedish crown	135.45/65
		Norwegian crown	135.45/65
		Danish crown	135.45/65
		U.S. dollars	135.45/65

TODAY AT

Cinema RAINBOW Tel: 625155

LETHAL WEAPON

Show: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30 p.m.

Cinema CONCORD Tel: 677420

STEALING HOME

Show: 3:30, 6:45, 8:30

HEROES STAND ALONE

Show: 5:15, 10:30

Cinema PHILADELPHIA Tel: 634144

Sylvester Stallone

LOCK UP

Show: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

Cinema NIJOM Tel: 675571

Mahmoud Yassin, Pussi, Salah Kabil

LICENCE TO KILL

(Arabic)

Show: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

Friday & Sunday cinema show at 11:00 a.m.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

All employers of Filipino domestic helpers from Kuwait and have not legalized their stay in Jordan are kindly requested to surrender their permits to the Philippine embassy not later than 26 December 1990. Otherwise they will be responsible for their repatriation to the Philippines and overstay penalty in accordance with the law.

The Philippine Embassy

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Gorbachev wins approval for referendums on union, land ownership

MOSCOW (R) — President Mikhail Gorbachev pushed a pair of resolutions through parliament Monday, calling for referendum on land ownership and preservation of the union, two of the Soviet Union's most contentious issues.

By 1,678 votes to 32, with 65 abstentions, the Congress of People's Deputies agreed to a country-wide referendum on preservation of a federative union.

Earlier, the parliament approved a Gorbachev motion to hold a referendum on private land ownership.

At least four of the 15 republics have said they would not sign a new treaty renewing the union under any circumstances, raising some doubt about the effect of the congress resolution. Others have expressed deep misgivings.

The text called for a referendum "on maintaining a reformed union as a federation of equal, sovereign Soviet Socialist Republics," with each republic's vote to be counted separately.

No date was set for the vote. The full Soviet parliament also approved the principles of a new union treaty binding the 15 constituent republics to the centre.

By a vote of 1,491 to 88, with 141 abstentions, the Congress of People's Deputies supported a resolution backing Gorbachev's blueprint for a renewed union.

The treaty must be ratified by the republics.

The congress will vote later on the basic concepts of the treaty article by article and major changes could still be made.

The three Baltic republics — Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia — and Georgia have said they would not sign the treaty under

any circumstances. The giant Russian Federation, under Gorbachev's rival Boris Yeltsin, said it would not rush into any agreement.

The congress also voted to preserve the country's full name — the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

A draft proposal, originally backed by Gorbachev, would have dropped the word "Socialist" and replaced it with the word "sovereign."

The vote on the land ownership referendum was approved by 1553 to 83 with 70 abstentions.

The Russian Federation has already approved private land holdings and other republics have moved to restore individual land ownership, something Gorbachev has already spoken out against.

The explosive issue in the officially-Socialist state is another bitter point of contention between the centre and the republics.

Gorbachev dismissed fears the referendum would violate the rights of republics to decide their own affairs.

"I am convinced it will not, because we are talking about the people," he told one dissenting deputy ahead of the vote.

Meanwhile U.S. Senate majority leader George Mitchell said Sunday the U.S. government should halt any aid to the Soviet Union if leaders crack down on the nation's rebellious republics.

Calling the recent signs from the Soviet Union "ominous," Mitchell said he thought the possibilities of Soviet retaliation against breakaway republics was increasing.

"I think we ought to have substantial aid unless and until the crackdown occurs and if it does, then... we surely should not be providing aid at that time," he said on NBC-TV's Meet The Press.

Mitchell is a member of Democratic Party, which controls both houses of Congress. President George Bush is a Republican.

Earlier this month Bush outlined a varied economic aid package that included technical and medical assistance and support for the Soviets to affiliate with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Bush announced his plan before Eduard Shevardnadze resigned as foreign minister, contending the Soviet Union was moving towards a dictatorship.

On Saturday, the head of the KGB, Vladimir Kryuchkov, warned of a possibility of bloodshed to restore order to the rebellious republics.

Bush has said the United States is concerned about Shevardnadze's resignation. "Obviously people are... wondering about the concerns raised by Mr. Shevardnadze," he said. "Life goes on," he added.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, national security adviser under former President Jimmy Carter, predicted the central Soviet government and the army is likely to try to rein in the non-Russian republics' shortly.

In the long run, he said a crackdown would fail and "either more accelerated movement toward some form of democratisation or maybe even a more dramatic breakup."



Slovenes vote big 'yes' for independence

LIJUBLJANA, Yugoslavia (R) — The Yugoslav Republic of Slovenia voted overwhelmingly to become an independent and sovereign state, in a plebiscite that could open the door to secession.

As the outcome of Sunday's vote became known, thousands of usually unemotional Slovenes joined spontaneous street celebrations. They sang patriotic songs and waved torches as brass bands played in the tiny republic's capital, Ljubljana.

"This is an historic night, we have waited for it for 1,000 years," Slovenian Prime Minister Lojze Peterle said. "Europe will have to accept an independent Slovenian state sooner or later."

According to unofficial final results, 88.2 per cent of voters opted for independence for Slovenia, Yugoslavia's most westernised and prosperous region.

Four per cent opposed independence for the republic of 1.9 million people, which borders Italy and Hungary, and the rest of the ballot papers were invalid, election officials said.

About 90 per cent of Slovenia's 1.5 million electorate voted.

Slovenian leaders have ruled out immediate secession, saying a complete break would come only if the six Yugoslav republics failed to work out a new political framework for the country within six months.

But the poll was a tumultuous climax to an independence drive that has picked up steam since Slovenia earlier this year became the first of Yugoslavia's republics to dump 45 years of Communist rule.

Central authority has crumbled with political liberalisation and the multi-ethnic federation has slid into a deep political crisis.

Slovenia is set apart from most of the rest of Yugoslavia by its western cultural and religious tradition.

It was part of the Austro-Hungarian empire before World War I, whereas most of the rest of Yugoslavia had been ruled for centuries by the Ottoman Turks.

Sunday's vote was likely to widen the rift between Slovenia and central authority in Belgrade, which denounced the plebiscite as an act of unilateral secession and threatened reprisals.

It was not immediately clear how Slovenia would try to assert independence. Federal authorities have already made clear that they will not accept an independent Slovenian army and they oppose giving the republic more economic autonomy.

IRA declares Christmas truce

LONDON (R) — IRA guerrillas fighting British rule in Northern Ireland declared a three-day Christmas truce and Britain said it hoped this could be a pointer towards solution of a conflict in which 3,000 have died in 21 years.

Northern Ireland Secretary Peter Brooke said the truce from Sunday midnight (2400 GMT) "albeit brief, is a welcome epitaph to 1990 and may be a pointer to achieving a lasting solution in 1991."

There have regularly been informal Christmas ceasefires by the IRA (Irish Republican Army) but the last to be announced in a statement, as this one was, was back in 1974.

It was extended well beyond Christmas, ending only after eight months of fruitless efforts to get peace talks off the ground.

Irish Prime Minister Charles Haughey said the new ceasefire, if extended, would "open up great possibilities for progress."

James Moynihan, leader of Northern Ireland's official Unionist Party, which strongly supports continued ties with Britain, denounced the IRA move.

"Criminals deserve no medals for ceasing criminal activity for three days," he said. "It will be small comfort for families of policemen and soldiers to know that their loved ones will not be murdered until Thursday."

The IRA has recently been using "human bombs" — strapping people into vehicles laden with explosives and forcing them to drive to security checkpoints.

One such attack in November killed seven people including six British soldiers. The total death toll this year is 74.

Sunday's IRA statement, released in Belfast, said its active service units had been told "to suspend all offensive military action in the British-occupied area for a period of three days from midnight tonight until midnight on Dec. 26."

But the IRA stressed that its units would fight back in self-defence.

Brooke has made several pre-trial questioning and testimony.

Papandreou, 71, rejected a summons by Spyrou last month and said he had told parliament whatever he had to say in the case in September 1989, shortly before being charged with taking bribes and other criminal wrongdoing.

Spyrou sent his order to three special state prosecutors working on the case against Papandreou. They, in turn, must give

the order to police, the officials said.

Spyrou said Friday that there were signs of Papandreou's guilt and he must appear for pre-trial testimony. Three other former Socialist ministers, charged with Papandreou in the bank scandal, have already testified.

The investigators have been wary of forcing the Socialist leader, who commands the support of about 40 per cent of the electorate, to appear.

It was at least possible that Simm Fein, the political wing of the republican movement, might favour an indefinite IRA truce which could enable Simm Fein to participate in talks.

Britain three weeks ago flew an extra battalion to Northern Ireland, bringing the number of its troops there to 11,000.

Security sources say British reinforcements and stepped-up patrolling averted a pre-Christmas IRA offensive.

The IRA has recently been using "human bombs" — strapping people into vehicles laden with explosives and forcing them to drive to security checkpoints.

One such attack in November killed seven, including six British soldiers.

Papandreou ordered to appear in court

ATHENS (R) — Former Socialist Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou has been ordered to appear in court to answer charges of complicity in a bank embezzlement scandal, Greek court officials said Monday.

Special magistrate Spiros Spyrou, probing the scandal which rocked Papandreou's 1981-1989 government, issued orders instructing police to force Papandreou, Greece's main opposition leader, to appear for

pre-trial questioning and testimony.

Papandreou, 71, rejected a summons by Spyrou last month and said he had told parliament whatever he had to say in the case in September 1989, shortly before being charged with taking bribes and other criminal wrongdoing.

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The investigators have been wary of forcing the Socialist leader, who commands the support of about 40 per cent of the electorate, to appear.

Mine blast kills 10 Sri Lankan troops

COLOMBO (R) — Ten soldiers on their way to a hospital were killed Monday in a land mine explosion in northern Sri Lanka, where the army is fighting Tamil rebels, military officials said.

The explosion occurred in a marshy jungle near the village of Horowapattana. The soldiers, most of them ill, were being transported from their camp for medical treatment, the officials said. Five soldiers also were wounded.

The deaths brought to 34 the number of soldiers killed since Wednesday when the army launched new offensive operations against Tamil Tiger rebels. The guerrilla movement is fighting to establish an independent Tamil state in the north and east of this island nation.

The offensive began after a land mine explosion Tuesday killed Brig. Lucky Wijeratne, the commander of the eastern front, and six soldiers. He was the most senior military officer killed by the rebels in their 7½-year insurgency.

The military says 131 rebels have been killed and 22 more have been captured since Wednesday in the latest offensive, codenamed "Operation Flash Out."

Meanwhile, military officials said an investigation has begun into the deaths of 50 Tamil women whose bullet-scarred bodies were found floating in a lagoon or on the roadside near two villages in the eastern Batticaloa district.

The officials said the women were not killed by government forces. But residents of the area, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the victims were either Tamil Tiger fighters or supporters.

Government planes pounded a rebel camp at Telpillai in the Jaffna peninsula Saturday, killing 17 rebels, the officials said.

The Tamil Tiger rebels later killed nine soldiers during the army's attempt to overrun the camp, according to the military officials, who cannot be quoted under briefing rules.

The Jaffna peninsula, 300 kilometres northeast of Colombo, is the Tigers' biggest stronghold.

The Tigers killed four other soldiers, including a captain, in an ambush Saturday at Wel Oya in the Trincomalee district, about 225 kilometres northeast of Colombo.

The archdiocese and two church parishes made other payments of almost \$7,000 to Long, according to a report released by the archdiocese. Marino, the first black archbishop of the Atlanta archdiocese, resigned from the post over the summer, citing "personal reasons."

His temporary replacement, Bishop James Lyke, said in response to news reports that "the personal reasons involved an intimate relationship with a woman."

The affair between Marino and Long apparently began shortly after he arrived in Atlanta in May 1988 and continued until just before his resignation. Marino has gone into seclusion for counselling at an undisclosed location. Long also has left the Atlanta area.

What can you do with \$1,000? NEW YORK (AP) — "What can a fellow do with \$1,000?" a young man asks in an O. Henry short story. "A thousand means much or little," replies a character called Old Bryson. That was in the century's first decade. In its last, \$1,000 still means much or little, especially during the holidays. What would \$1,000 buy in O. Henry's day? "One man may buy a happy home with it and laugh at Rockefeller," Old Bryson said. "Another could send his wife south with it and save her life. A thousand dollars would buy pure milk for 100 babies during June, July and August and save 50 of their lives."

"It would furnish an education for an ambitious boy... you could move to a New Hampshire town and live respectably two years on it. You could rent Madison Square Garden for one evening with it." These days, a Christmas shopper could buy a Giorgio Armani suit at Saks, 18-carat gold horse cuff links at Tiffany or a 4½-foot (1½ metre) long stuffed tiger at Fao Schwarz toy store. A tourist could spend a night at the Hotel Pierre in Suite 2111, which has a balcony, kitchen and chandeliered dining room but no view of Central Park — but that's \$1,100 a night, minimum. Nor can a thousand dollars buy most of the things on old Bryson's list: The median cost of a bumpy home in Metropolitan New York is \$176,700, but \$1,000 will buy a doll house, fully furnished, wallpapered and carpeted, at Fao Schwarz.

"Forward-looking strategies for the advancement of women to the year 2000," the question of aging; auditor's reports on U.N. activities; and a host of other issues that could be disposed of at the subcommittee level, or shelved pending concrete developments.

"We don't need so many resolutions," said De Marco. "We need fewer, stronger, much more topical, and much more effective resolutions."

Spies and De Marco have been discussing their ideas separately with committee chairman, U.N. officials and ambassadors.

"I've been finding very positive reaction among the delegations," De Marco said. "Wherever you meet delegations, you find that they are all discussing this matter," he said.

Spies said that rather than carry over items from year to year, they should die out and be approached anew each session.

"There are probably not more than two dozen such items which justify the time and sustained attention of the world parliament," Spies said.

Each year, the whole Assembly is currently obligated to devoting time to such matters as appointment of new members of the Economic and Social Council; the report of the U.N. University;

"Many items are duplicative or overtaken by time and events. As long as this is the case it will be difficult to ensure that its deliberations are worthy of respect and the image of an intellectual 'talk-shop' will linger among serious diplomats and publics," Spies wrote.

Among the resolutions remaining on the current agenda are retractions of anti-apartheid declarations; redundant anti-Israel measures, including debate on its 1981 air strike against an Iraqi nuclear reactor; the report on the drinking water supply and sanitation decade; measures to be taken against Nazi, fascist, and neo-fascist activities; and a plethora of other holdovers.

Spies says that rather than carry over items from year to year, they should die out and be approached anew each session.

Priest officially declared new president of Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE (Agencies) — Haiti's electoral board Sunday declared Roman Catholic priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a leftist candidate with broad popular support, the official winner of last week's presidential poll.

Aristide won 66.7 per cent of the 1.23 million ballots cast on Dec. 16, the board said in a television broadcast. The election was the first held in the Caribbean country since 1987, when 34 people were killed as they waited to vote.

After the announcement thousands of Haitians poured from their homes and ran alongside the car in which the newly elected president toured the capital.

Former World Bank economist Marc Bazin was second in the 11-man contest, attracting 15.4 per cent of the vote, the board said. Louis Dejoie, a populist leader and the son of former Dictator Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier's main opponent in the 1957 election, was third with five per cent.

Aristide's inauguration is scheduled for Feb. 7, but Electoral Board officials have expressed concern that the

dreaded Tonton Macoutes, a paramilitary group organised by the Duvalier dynasty, could pose a threat.

"You have made a sacrifice to show the world the true face of Haiti," Aristide told the nation, in Creole, immediately after the announcement was made on state-run radio. He spoke from the office of his Centre for Homeless Children.

The four major runners-up had all conceded defeat by Saturday, after partial results showed Aristide had won by a landslide.

"Things must change, things must change for everyone," he said, repeating the words of Pope John-Paul II, whose March 1983 visit to Haiti initiated the official Catholic opposition to the Duvalier dictatorship.

Legislative and local election results have not as yet been announced. Runoff elections will be held Jan. 20.

Most analysts believe the National Front for Change and Democracy, the left-wing coalition which nominated Aristide, will dominate the two-chamber National Assembly and will form a parliamentary bloc with Dejoie's Party.

Surinam air force chief replaces army commander

PARAMARIBO (R) — Surinam's armed forces commander and former military ruler, Colonel Desi Bouterse, has resigned and his second-in-command has taken over as successor, a military spokesman has said.

Bouterse, who ruled this former Dutch colony for eight years following a military coup in February 1980, met Saturday night with civilian President Ramsewak Shankar to inform him of his resignation, the spokesman told Reuters in a telephone interview from Paramaribo.

Bouterse resigned because "he doesn't feel the government is backing the national army, and it doesn't allow the army to do what they are supposed to do and the way they are supposed to do it," the spokesman said.

Army Commander Badressien Sital also resigned, he said.

Air Force Commander Ivan Graaouogst, in his first official statement as acting armed forces commander, said "the policies for the former commander will be continued," an apparent reference to attempts to sign a peace treaty to end a four and a half year guerrilla war.

Bouterse returned to Surinam Saturday from a visit to Ghana and Switzerland.

The decision to resign came after Shankar failed to protest when Bouterse was held in police custody in Amsterdam while in transit to Ghana.

The spokesman said Shankar, who had travelled to the Netherlands for medical treatment, was on the same plane as Bouterse but did not offer assistance when Dutch police held the military commander and his delegation was held incommunicado.

Police prevented Bouterse from meeting with reporters three times over the last two weeks.

No government officials were available for comment on the surprise decision.

Bouterse came to power in a relatively bloodless military uprising in February 1980, known as the "sergeants' rebellion," and formed a government with a platform of Socialist-nationalist policies.

The Netherlands continued a \$2.7 billion a year aid programme that began when Surinam gained its independence in 1975, but the aid was cut off after 15 opposition leaders were killed in December 1982 while in police custody.

In July 1986, Ronny Brunswijk, a former army sergeant, launched a guerrilla war against Bouterse's military regime with the support of Bushmenges, rural descendants of slaves in eastern and southeastern Surinam. The fighting has claimed more than 500 lives.

With internal and international pressure, Bouterse agreed to hold free elections in November 1987, and Ramsewak Shankar came to power at the head of a three-party coalition.

I killed in fight between Bangladesh students

DHAKA (AP) — One man was killed and nearly 25 injured in clashes between rival students in the Bangladesh port of Chittagong Monday, police said.

They said the fighting erupted when members of the rightist Islami Chhatra Shibir attacked a March Chhatra Shibir at the All Party Students Union (APSU) to mourn the death of an APSU leader.

"The man fatally hit by a bullet as he was passing by was an employee of a detergent factory," police said. Ten seriously injured persons, mostly students, were sent to hospital.

Doctors at Chittagong Medical College Hospital said the APSU student leader, Farukuzzaman Farook, who was injured in a fight with Shibir activists Sunday, died early Monday.

APSU called Monday's march to mourn Farook's death and denounce violence by Shibir, the student wing of the fundamentalist Jamaat-E-Islami.

Authorities closed the 10,000-student Chittagong University after clashes between rival groups Saturday, in which more than 150 were injured.

U.N. assembly mulls expanded session, other reforms

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The General Assembly ended its fall session last week just in time — to allow delegates to catch the last sailing of the Queen Mary 2 to Europe for Christmas.

The fact that the Queen Mary hasn't steamed to Europe for decades made no difference. The Assembly is still working on a schedule dating to sailing days.

U.N. officials say that's the kind of thing that underscores the body's long-overdue need for reform.

They point not only to the timing of sessions, but to the huge load of routine business that delegations must deal with, the crush of unnecessary paperwork and a lack of time to deal with things that really matter.

As the United Nations takes a stronger role in world affairs, hopes are rising that the assembly will become more efficient.

Through the 15-nation Security Council gets most of the limelight at times of international crisis, the Assembly, which includes all 159 member states, handles much of the organization's business.

Timing is one important area. "The timing of the U.N. General Assembly sessions was originally determined with an eye to sailing schedules of the Queen Mary," says the Undersecretary-General for

General Assembly Affairs, Ronald Spies. "It is now anachronistic."

The Assembly has ended its fall meeting at the same time since the founding of the United Nations in 1945. The Queen Mary quit its ocean-crossing days long ago and has been a tourist attraction off Long Beach, California, since 1967.

"The Ga needs to be viewed as a year-round body, not in continuous meeting, but always available at call, not constrained by out-of-date considerations," Spies, the top American in the world body, wrote in a working paper.

"What kind of General Assembly is this, which works for three months and hibernates during the remaining nine months?" asked Guido de Marco, Malta's foreign minister, who is president of the Assembly this year.

De Marco says the General Assembly should expand its calendar of meetings to focus on foreign affairs in the September through December session, and add assemblies on humanitarian affairs in March and an economic and social session in May and June.

"The idea of emergency and special sessions is no longer necessary. The assembly can meet at any time," Spies wrote.

The September-to-December session's time constraint "causes distortions in procedures and discussions and limits the body's relevance."

"Delegations complain of being rushed, inundated with documentation outrunning their absorptive capacities, of having to give short shrift to matters demanding time, discussion and careful thought," according to Spies.

In the few autumn months that the General Assembly is in session, delegates are expected to absorb about 1.4 million pages of Assembly documents alone. This does not include other U.N. documents.

Spies advocates a general debate in November, with assembly committees churning out the work of the body from January until the following autumn.

De Marco says three-yearly assemblies would enable the General Assembly to focus its work on specific themes, attracting like-minded government ministers concerned with those areas.

This would pave the way for advances in social, economic and humanitarian areas like the breakthroughs announced every fall in the political sphere, when foreign ministers congregate in New York every September.

A steering committee consisting of the 21 vice presidents of the major Assembly subcommittees and the chairmen of the main committees and the Assembly president "could tidy matters up between part-sessions," De Marco said.

The vice presidents include representatives of the United States, the Soviet Union, China, Britain and France.

And both officials agree that the agenda of the Assembly needs to be pruned.

"Many items are duplicative or overtaken by time and events. As long as this is the case it will be difficult to ensure that its deliberations are worthy of respect and the image of an intellectual 'talk-shop' will linger among serious diplomats and publics," Spies wrote.

Among the resolutions remaining on the current agenda are retractions of anti-apartheid declarations; redundant anti-Israel measures, including debate on its 1981 air strike against an Iraqi nuclear reactor; the report on the drinking water supply and sanitation decade; measures to be taken against Nazi, fascist, and neo-fascist activities; and a plethora of other holdovers.

Spies says that rather than carry over items from year to year, they should die out and be approached anew each session.

"There are probably not more than two dozen such items which justify the time and sustained attention of the world parliament," Spies said.

Each year, the whole Assembly is currently obligated to devoting time to such matters as appointment of new members of the Economic and Social Council; the report of the U.N. University;

COLUMN

Akihito celebrates 57th birthday

TOKYO (AP) — Emperor Akihito, who celebrated his 57th birthday Sunday, downplayed concerns about the "banzai" cheers at his recent enthronement, saying they did not remind him of World War II. Shouts of "banzai," or "long life" for his father, the late Emperor Hirohito, were a rallying cry for Japanese soldiers in the war. Japanese still use the cheer sometimes when the emperor is present, but its formal inclusion in the enthronement ceremony Nov. 12 caused some worry about reviving painful memories for foreign guests. "My generation came after the war. I think I can say that our generation has lived long enough in an age that has nothing to do with such a thing," Akihito said Thursday.

It was at least possible that Simm Fein, the political wing of the republican movement, might favour an indefinite IRA truce which could enable Simm Fein to participate in talks.

Britain three weeks ago flew an extra battalion to Northern Ireland, bringing the number of its troops there to 11,000.

Security sources say British reinforcements and stepped-up patrolling averted a pre-Christmas IRA offensive.

The IRA has recently been using "human bombs" — strapping people into vehicles laden with